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ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes the procedures and the results of a 1977-78 Houston Independent School District (HISD) study to identify those groups who are most influential in determining public school policy and legislation, and to determine what educational issues were of most concern to those groups and what their positions on these issues were. The issues were identified by a review of the literature and interviews with selected HISD administrators. The issues fell into four general areas: school finance, scope and content of education, quality of education and educational opportunity, and influence groups and the control of public education. Eleven of the 30 groups who were requested to participate stated positions on the issues. Most groups favored equal state funds per student for every school district with the same tax rate, assuming that different types of students would be funded at different rates. The respondents were divided on the issue of mainstreaming severely handicapped students--most participants would like to adequately serve both regular and special students but realize that there are conflicts in serving both groups of students in the same classroom. The questionnaire used in the study is included. (Author/IRT)

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Title IV-C Pilot Program: An Educational Needs Projection Model

Project Report

Policy Study of Educational Issues

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July, 1978

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DISCLAIMER

The head of each institution, group or office identified as being most influential in determining public school policy and legislation in Texas was requested to participate in this study or to have a member of his staff participate in the study. Some individuals agreed to participate, as an individual, but did not feel that they could state the position of their group. Consequently, the opinions expressed by the participants are the opinions of an executive from each group but do not necessarily represent the position of the organization identified. In addition, the position of the participant on some issues has been interpreted and classified by the senior author. Interpretations and comments on the responses of the participants are the judgments of the senior author.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Educational issues were identified by a review of the literature and interviews with selected HISD administrators in four general areas: school finance, scope and content of education, quality of education and educational opportunity, and influence groups and the control of public education. A total of twenty issues were identified. Eleven of the 30 groups who were requested to participate in the study stated their positions on the issues. The groups which participated were the following: Texas Association of School Administrators, Texas Education Agency (Programs and Personnel Division), Texas League of Women Voters, Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers, Texas State Teachers Association, Texas Association of Secondary School Principals, General Superintendent/HISD, Congress of Houston Teachers, Houston Federation of Teachers, Houston Principals Association, and the Houston League of Women Voters.

In brief, the results of the study were the following: (1) Most groups favored the uniform assessment of all types of property--this implies assessing property at market value; (2) the participants were divided on the issues of taxing intangible and/or personal property--whether these groups would support the taxation of personal and/or tangible property would depend on the procedures adopted for taxing such property and the nature of the rest of the tax system; (3) the groups were divided on whether all classes of property should be taxed at the same rate - action on this issue would probably depend on the procedures and rates proposed for taxing different classes of property; (4) the groups were divided concerning the best measure of a local school district's ability to pay for public education - decisions concerning which measure of fiscal capacity to use are probably dependent on other aspects of the educational system, such as the proportion of funds received from different funding sources and types of taxes; (5) there was a strong consensus that a smaller proportion of the funds for public education should be raised by property taxes (6) most groups favored equal state funds per student for every school district with the same tax rate, assuming that different types of students would be funded at different rates (i.e., weighted-pupil finance plan); (7) the respondents were divided on the issue of mainstreaming severely handicapped students--most participants would like to adequately serve both regular and special students but realize that there are conflicts in serving both groups of students in the same classroom; (8) the groups were divided on the issue of funding differences between regular and special students--without information on the cost of serving different categories of students and the number of students in different categories, it is doubtful that the different groups would interpret the issue in the same manner; (9) the groups were divided concerning the services they thought public education should provide--there is a need for clarification of this issue for solutions to be sought; (10) most groups agreed that "Coordination of services is an important issue and additional legislation or voluntary action by agencies is needed to provide for the coordination of services"; (11) most groups took the position that "if the cost of public education continues to rise, while student achievement remains low or declines, alternatives to public education will be sought," although others took the position that "if both services and

the cost of public education continue to rise, support of public education is likely to remain"; (12) on the issue of allocation of resources between "high cost" and regular students, several of the participants took the position that we can afford to provide for all student needs, while others thought that some limit on expenditures for "high cost" students should exist; (13) the groups supported a combination of desegregation strategies - the most popular strategies were "elective transfer plans" and "Magnet schools" - the least popular strategies were "forced transportation of students" and "school pairing"; (14) the groups were divided on the issue of increasing the school year; (15) all groups supported the expansion of vocational education of all types to prepare students for skilled employment; (16) most groups thought that both competency tests and normative tests should be used to assess the educational progress of students; (17) to assess school effectiveness the groups supported the use of both competency tests and normative tests or competency tests with statewide norms; (18) the groups were divided on the issue of the authority of the federal government concerning educational programs, but most agreed with the position that "the federal government and the federal courts may rule certain practices illegal but should not state the specific practices for complying with federal law"; (19) the majority of the groups thought that the "adoption of union tactics by teacher organizations would result in the loss of public support for the schools and should be avoided." It seems especially important that most groups favored the uniform assessment of property (issue 1), there was a strong consensus that a smaller proportion of the funds for public education should be raised by property taxes (issue 5), most groups favored equal state funds per student for school districts with the same tax rate (issue 6), most groups were divided concerning the services they thought public schools should provide (issue 9), most groups thought coordination of services was important and that action in this area was needed (issue 10), all groups supported the expansion of vocational education (issue 15), and the majority of the groups thought that the adoption of union tactics by teacher organizations would result in the loss of public support for schools.

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Policy Study of Educational Issues - Revised Version

Policy Study of Educational Issues

Introduction

The general purpose of this project (Title IV-C Pilot Program: An Educational Needs Projection Model) is to develop procedures for forecasting the personnel needed by the school district for a five-year period in response to current and expected legislation, changing student population, etc. To anticipate the results of current and expected educational policies and legislation, a study was proposed for the 1977-78 project year to (a) identify those groups who are most influential in determining public school policy and legislation and (b) determine what educational issues were of most concern to these groups and their positions on these educational issues.

Purpose of Paper

The purpose of this paper is to summarize the procedures and the results of this Policy Study of Educational Issues.

Identification of Most Influential Groups

Objective I of the 1977-78 project was to determine the 15 major state organizations or offices and the 10 local organizations or offices which are most influential in determining public school policy and legislation in Texas (a) by surveying the top HISD administrators (all superintendents in HISD), (b) by considering the major lobbies in the Texas legislature, and (c) by considering the results of previous studies.

All HISD administrators with superintendent in their titles were asked to list the 15 state and 10 local offices, groups or organizations that are most influential in determining public school policy and legislation. The rationale of asking superintendents to list such groups was that the top school officials know which groups are most influential due to their experience in education and the level at which they work. This is the reputational technique (c.f., Hamley & Wirt, 1974) and seems to be a reasonable procedure for identifying influential groups. The results of this survey are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Two comprehensive studies of policymaking and governance in the public schools were reviewed: (1) "State Policy Making for the Public Schools of Texas" by Branson & Steele, 1974, and (2) "Who Governs American Education: One More Time" by Tucker & Ziegler, 1977.

Branson and Steele (1974) consider six major actors at the state level (Legislature, Governor, State Commissioner, State Board of Education, Texas Education Agency, special interest groups) and point out that the actors involved depend on the issue. When state taxation is an issue, interest groups not usually concerned with education become involved. The Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA) with its affiliates was considered the most important special interest group. Within TSTA the Texas Classroom Teachers Association (TCTA) was considered the most influential. The Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) was considered the second most influential special interest group. All of the offices, groups and organizations cited by Branson and Steel as being involved in public education policymaking at the state level are presented in Table 3.

Tucker and Ziegler (1977) concern themselves more with policymaking at the school district level. The six major categories of actors they consider are: the school board, the superintendent, the central administrative staff, other professionals (teachers, principals, etc.), the pupils and other governments. At the local level the superintendent was considered the most important actor. The school board also plays an important role, but the other groups, with the exception of the state and federal courts, have little influence on most public education policies. The state and federal courts are important because they may mandate educational policies and they have been increasingly used by minority groups to influence public education. These groups are listed in Table 4.

A request for a list of registered lobbies in Texas from the Texas Secretary of State has not been answered. Since non-profit interest groups (e.g., TSTA, TASB) are not required to register as lobbies, this source of information is not as useful as we thought it might be when we planned this study.

In consideration of these and other sources of information (e.g., Campbell, Cunningham, Nystrand, & Usdan, 1975; Campbell & Massoni, 1976) the state and local offices, groups and organizations listed in Tables 5 and 6 were identified as potential participants for a policy study of educational issues.[1]

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[1] All local groups cited six or more times are listed in Table 5 with the addition of the superintendent. All state groups cited four or more times are listed in Table 6 with the addition of the state Commissioner of Education and the Texas Classroom Teachers Association. These groups selected due to their indicated influence in previous studies.

Table 1

State Groups Thought to be Most
Influential by HISD School Superintendents

Number of Times Cited	Organization
15	Texas State Teachers Association
9	Governor Texas Association of School Administrators
8	State Board of Education Texas Education Agency
7	Texas Association of School Boards Texas Parent Teachers Association
6	Senate Education Committee House Education Committee
5	League of Women Voters
4	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Texas Association of School Business Officials Texas Association of Secondary School Principals Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association
3	Education Service Centers Lieutenant Governor Texas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Texas Classroom Teachers Association Texas Manufacturers Association Texas Medical Association

These lists will be compared with lists from previous studies to identify those offices or groups thought to be most influential in determining public school policy and legislation.

Table 2

Local Groups Thought to be Most
Influential by HISD School Superintendents

Number of Times Cited	Organization
13	Houston Chamber of Commerce - Education Committee
11	Houston Teachers Association
10	Houston Principals Association League of United Latin American Citizens
8	League of Women Voters PTA
7	Houston Federation of Teachers PTA - Northwest Council PTA - San Jacinto Council
6	Congress of Houston Teachers Harris County Council of Organizations HISD Board of Education PTA - Houston Council
4	Houston-Galveston Area Council Mexican American Council of Education The Urban League
3	Ministerial Alliance PTO

These lists will be compared with lists from previous studies to identify those offices or groups thought to be most influential in determining public school policy and legislation.

Table 1

"State Policy Making for the Public Schools of Texas"

Governor
Lieutenant Governor

Legislature
House - House Education Committee
Speaker of the House

Senate - Senate Education Committee
Senate Finance Committee

Texas Education Agency (TEA)
State Board of Education
State Commissioner of Education
State Department of Education

Finance Groups
*1. Senate Interim Committee on Public School Finance
*2. Texas State Teachers Association Committee of School Finance and Programs
*3. State Board of Education Committee on Public School Finance
4. Texas Research League Study of Foundation School Program Financing
5. Texas Association of School Boards Foundation School Program and Finance Committee
6. Texas Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations
7. Texas Council of Major School Districts School Finance Task Force
8. Texas Manufacturers Association Public Education Research Committee

*Most Prominent

Non-educational interest group with influence on school finance matters: Texas Manufacturers Association

Legislative Information Sources
1. Texas Education Agency
2. Texas State Teachers Association
3. Local District sources
4. Texas Association of School Boards
5. State Board of Education
6. Legislative Budget Board

Influence in Specific Areas
Vocational Education Association
State Council for Exceptional Children
State Board of Examiners for Teacher Education
State Commission for Professional Competencies

Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA)

*1. Texas Association of School Administration (TASA)
*2. Texas Classroom Teachers Association (TCTA)
3. Texas Association of Secondary Principals
4. Texas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
5. Texas Association of School Librarians
6. Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association
7. Texas Association of School Principals
8. Texas Association for Continuing Adult Education
9. Texas Retired Teachers Association
10. Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association of Texas
11. Texas Association of County Superintendents
12. Texas Association of School Business Officials
13. Texas Educational Secretaries Association

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* Most Influential

Table 4

"Who Governs American Education: One More Time"

*(1)	School Board
*(2)	Superintendent
(3)	Central Administrative Staff (Staff Official)
(4)	Other Professionals (Line Official)
(5)	Public
(6)	Other Governments (Government Official)

* Most influential

Table 5

Local Offices, Groups or Organizations
Selected as Most Influential*

Superintendent (GS/HISD)

School Board (SB/HISD)

Houston Chamber of Commerce - Education Committee (HCC-EC)

Houston Teachers Association (HTA)
Houston Principals Association (HPA)
Houston Federation of Teachers (HFT)
Congress of Houston Teachers (CHT)

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
League of Women Voters (H/LWV)
PTA - Northwest Council (PTA-NWC)
PTA - San Jacinto Council (PTA - SJC)
PTA - Houston Council (PTA - HC)
Harris County Council of Organizations (HCCO)

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* There are many other influential groups but it is beyond the resources of this study to include them. The order of listing of organizations does not indicate importance.

Table 6

State Offices, Groups or Organizations
Selected As Most Influential*

Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA)
- Texas Classroom Teachers Association (TCTA)
- Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA)
- Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO)
- Texas Association of Secondary School Principals (TASSP)
- Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association (TEPSA)

Governor (GT)

State Board of Education (SBE)

Texas Education Agency (TEA)

Commissioner of Education (TCE)

Texas Association of School Boards (TASB)

Texas Parent Teachers Association (TPTA)

Senate Education Committee (TSEC)

House Education Committee (THEC)

League of Women Voters (T/LWV)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (T/NAACP)

* There are many other influential groups but it is beyond the resources of this study to include them. The order of listing of organizations does not indicate importance.

Issues in Public Education

The issues for this study were developed by a review of the literature and by interviews with selected HISD personnel. This study of educational policy considered issues in four general areas: school finance, scope and content of education, quality of education and educational opportunity, and influence groups and the control of public education. The 20 issues are included in the appendix. Each section was preceded by introductory information to help clarify the issues that followed.

The number of issues considered was limited so that a more thorough consideration of each issue could be made. Participants were requested, however, to identify other current major education issues that had not been presented in this study (see Table 8).

School Finance in Texas

Texas school districts receive funds from sources at the local, county, state, and federal level (see appendix: Source of Revenue by School District Size). Approximately 45% of a school district's funds are raised locally, 45% comes from the state and 10% comes from the federal government. A small amount also comes from the county.

All money for school construction is raised locally, usually by bond elections. The local contribution to a district's operating budget is raised primarily through property taxes. Some money is raised by charging tuition for certain students, by renting school buildings, by interest on operating funds deposited in banks, etc. (Education Code Ch. 20).

At the county level a small amount of money may be available to school districts (Education Code Ch. 18) from county property taxes.

At the state level monies are available from several sources: Available School Fund, Foundation School Program (personnel salaries, operating costs, compensatory education, etc.), and other categories (see appendix: Source of Revenue).

At the present time every school district receives approximately $240 per the average number of students in attendance (ADA) from the Available School Fund. Revenues for the Available School Fund come from "...one-fourth of the taxes on motor fuel and natural resources...and the earnings from the Permanent School Fund...supported by the proceeds from...public lands constitutionally dedicated for educational purposes" (McClesky, Dickens & Butcher, 1975, p. 294) (also see Education Code Ch. 15).

School districts may also receive funds from the Foundation School Program (Education Code Ch. 16). The purpose of the Foundation School Program (FSP) is to provide a basic educational program. The money necessary for (a) personnel salaries (for regular education, special education, vocational education, and blind and deaf children), (b) operating cost, (c) categorical aid (e.g., educationally disadvantaged pupils, driver education), and (d) transportation services constitute the cost of a basic education program (see Appendix A for list of categories). A school district receives the cost of the FSP minus the funds it has already received from the Available School Fund and the Local Fund Assignment (LFA).[2]

Approximately 85% of the cost of the FSP for all of the school districts in the state is paid for by state funds. The other 15% of the cost of the FSP is paid for locally. State funds for the FSP come from the state's General Revenue Fund and are thus based primarily on sales taxes.

School districts provide, and are required by state and federal laws to provide, more educational services than are considered under the Foundation School Program. To equalize the ability of school districts to provide these additional services some school districts may receive Equalization School Aid from the state.

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[2]"The local share of program cost will be computed on either the full-market value (G.O.E.R) of property x 18¢ per $100 or the district's index values (G.O.E.R. Ag. Values) x 20⅓¢ per $100 whichever is less... No district's LFA shall exceed 125% of its prior year LFA." (Texas Public School Finance Plan: Explanations and Interpretations, TEA, September, 1977, p. 25).

A school district whose property value per ADA is less than 110% of the state average property value per ADA may receive up to $185 per ADA.[3] A school district whose property value per ADA is less than 50% of the state average may receive up to $210 per student. Equalization School Aid is paid from the Foundation School Fund up to a current maximum of $1.35 million dollars. These funds come primarily from sales taxes.

In addition to these sources of state funds, school districts may also receive funds to provide educational services for Limited-English-Speaking-Ability (LESA) students (Educational Code Ch. 21 Subchapter L. Bilingual Education). At the present time school districts may receive $45 per LESA student in grades K through 5. Funds for this program come from the Foundation School Program Fund (Education Code 21.460) and thus are derived from sales taxes.

Approximately 10% of the money received by school districts is from the federal government. The majority of this money is categorical aid for compensatory education programs. The majority of these funds presumably comes from income taxes (in 1975 individual income taxes accounted for 43.6% of federal revenues and corporation income taxes accounted for 14.5%).

The percentage of income obtained from each source of revenue by local school districts varies by the size of a school district, the composition of its student body, the wealth per student, etc. Examples of the percentage of income derived from major sources of revenue for six types of school districts are presented in the appendix on Source of Revenue by School District Size. For example, the Houston ISD receives 53.3% locally, 40.9% from the state and 5.9% from the federal government. Of the local monies, 94% is

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[3]The formula for determining the amount of equalization aid that a school district may receive is:

$$SEA = 1 - \frac{DLFA/ADA}{(SLFA/ADA) \times 1.25} \times (\$185 \text{ or } \$210) \times ADA$$

where SEA is the state equalization aid, DLFA/ADA is the district's local fund assignment divided by the average daily attendance, SLFA/ADA is the total statewide local fund assignment divided by the ADA for the state, and ADA is the number of students in average daily attendance in the district. (Education Code 16.301)

raised by current property taxes and 6% is miscellaneous local revenues (e.g., tuition charges). At the state level all school districts receive approximately $240 per ADA. This amounts to 13.3% of the Houston ISD budget estimates for the current year. Houston ISD receives federal funds directly and through the Texas Education Agency that account for 5.9% of the major sources of revenues.

Issues in school finance concern fair assessment and taxing practices, taxing intangible and personal wealth, and reliance on the property tax as the major source of revenue at the local level for public education.

Scope and Content of Educational Programs

Public education is not a right guaranteed by the federal constitution or the constitution of the state of Texas, but in Texas a basic educational program is guaranteed to every citizen of the state by the Foundation School Program (Education Code Ch. 16). Students enrolled in the regular education program may receive services from 5 years of age until they graduate from high school or reach 21 years of age. Students in special education may receive services from 3 to 21 years of age, and blind and/or deaf children may receive services from birth to 23 years of age. The amount of money guaranteed for the education of a student of any category is limited by state laws and regulations.

Recent federal legislation may greatly affect the scope and content of educational programs. The "Education of All Handicapped Children Act" (Public Law 94-142) states that all handicapped children have the right to a free appropriate public education. This has been interpreted to mean that local school districts are obligated to pay for all appropriate services for handicapped children (i.e., academic instruction, self-help care, occupational and physical therapy, residential placement) that are not paid for by state and federal funds. No limitation on the financial obligation of local school districts to pay for the services to handicapped children is stated and, by implication, there is no limitation on the school district's financial obligations.

Public Law 94-142 has several other major provisions. To insure that handicapped children receive appropriate services, it mandates that the child's parent or guardian be involved in the development of a written Individualized Education Program for the child. If the parents are not satisfied, they are guaranteed access to a particular due process procedure and eventually, the right to bring civil action against the school district.

Public Law 94-142 requires testing in a child's dominant language with instruments and procedures which are not linguistically or culturally discriminatory; serving the child in the least restrictive environment, that is, if possible, serving the child in a classroom with regular education students; the development of an Individualized Education Program for each handicapped child in conjunction with his parents; and the requirement that those who provide educational services to handicapped children receive additional training. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 incorporates Public Law 94-142 and makes it a violation of an individual's civil rights to deny him service because he is handicapped. The importance of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the safeguard provisions of Public Law 94-142 is that they establish means (it is relatively easy) for a school district to be sued in federal court for not providing appropriate services for handicapped children.

Issues concerning the scope and content of educational programs at this time are largely concerned with the interpretation and implementation of PL 94-142. Public Law 94-142 raises questions concerning who has the responsibility for providing educational services, what services are considered educational, who will actually provide services, who is eligible for services, and who will pay for services.

Quality of Education/Educational Opportunity

A great deal has been written recently about declining test scores on national examinations. This fact, coupled with the fact of rising school taxes, leads the public to think that public education is not as good now as previously and that it costs considerably more than it did ten or more years ago. These two facts raise a number of questions.

The first questions involve the facts. Are the same groups of students scoring lower today? Does the test measure the same constructs today that it did previously? Is the current school curriculum related less to the tests than the old curriculum? Are the teachers as well qualified? Are the costs of public education really larger today? To what extent are increased costs accounted for by general inflation? To what extent are increased costs due to serving students who previously either were not enrolled or dropped out of school sooner than they do today? To what extent are increased costs accounted for by educational services provided by schools today that previously were not provided?

student achievement data

It is true that students from public schools today score lower on tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) than they did ten years ago, but are they the same students? This varies between 1963 to 1970 and 1970 to 1975. The Advisory Panel on the Scholastic Aptitude Test Score Decline has identified "roughly two-thirds to three-fourths of the decline between 1963 and about 1970 as resulting from 'compositional' changes in the SAT-taking population." (On Further Examination, 1977, p. 24). There has been a larger proportion of children from the lower social-economic strata enrolled in school and staying in school through high school. There has been an increasing proportion of students going on to college, thus more students with lower scoring records have need to take the SAT. There has also been a high school curriculum shift away from critical reading and careful writing, both vehicles to broader vocabulary and expanded knowledge.

From 1970 to 1975 scores on the SAT continued to decline. It is estimated that only one-fourth of the decline in these years may be due to a change in the composition of the students taking the test. Both lower and middle class students performed more poorly during this time period. The Advisory Panel on SAT Score Decline suggested six reasons for the continued decline of all classes of students: "a reduction in the number of courses that all students are required to take"; "diminished seriousness of purpose... to mastery of skills and knowledge... in the schools, the home, and the society generally"; " a good deal more of most children's learning now develops through viewing and listening than through traditional modes"; "changes ... in the role of the family in the educational process"; "the disruption in the life of the country"; and "diminution in young people's learning motivation" (On Further Examination, 1977, pp. 46-48).

It would seem to be the case that the values and motivations of today's students are less academic than the students of the Sputnik era. Reisman (1965) theorized that man in the urbanized, postindustrial society would place less value on personal development and productivity and more emphasis on consumption and the use of leisure time. It would seem that the students enrolled in public education today are less motivated to acquire a more traditional academic education and the curriculum reflects these changes.

We may assume that a larger proportion of teachers are not from middle class backgrounds and are less concerned with academic knowledge than teachers of ten years ago and more concerned with teaching children to live in a multicultural society. Some support for this assumption is evident in the emphasis on human relations and de-emphasis of academic skills as teaching objectives. (Broudy, Harry S. "A New Voice for the Schools." Today's Education, March-April, 1977, pp. 28-31).

school cost data

According to estimates from the National Center for Educational Statistics, the total cost of public elementary and secondary education rose from 26.3 billion dollars in 1965-66 to 67.1 billion dollars in 1975-76. This is an increase of 155%. However, in comparable dollars (using 1975-76 as the comparison year) the increase was from 47 billion to 67.1 billion or an increase of 42.7%.

These total expenditures may be divided into current expenditures (instructional and support staff, transportation, maintenance, etc.), capital outlay (school buildings, buses, equipment) and interest (on loans for school construction). Current expenditures increased from 37.6 billion to 59.1 billion in comparable dollars or an increase of 57.2%. Capital outlay decreased from 8 billion to 6 billion or a decrease of 33.3%. Interest increased from 1.4 billion to 2 billion or an increase of 42.9%. These figures are affected by a large increase in enrollment from 1965 to 1970 and a decline in enrollment from 1970 to the present.

"Annual current expenditures per pupil (in 1975-76 dollars) increased from $933 in 1965-66 to $1,388 in 1975-76...". This is an increase of 48.9%. "The average annual salary of classroom teachers (in 1975-76 dollars) increased from $11,290 in 1965-66 to an estimated $12,448 in 1975-76...". This is an increase of 10.3%.

In short, general inflation accounts for a great deal of the increased costs of education. In comparable dollars the total cost of public education increased by 42.7% from 1965-66 to 1975-76. During this same time period teacher salaries, the largest single expenditure for public schools, increased only about 10%. The total per pupil expenditure in 1975-76 was approximately $1,627 (67.1 billion dollars divided by 41,251 thousand ADA) and the current expenditure (teachers, administrators, transportation, operating costs) was $1,388.[4]

Some school districts are affected more adversely than others. School districts with declining enrollments, declining property tax bases and increasing numbers of special students are especially hard hit. This seems to be the situation in the large urban school systems of the East and Midwest (Callahan, et al., 1977) and to a lesser extent these problems affect school systems, large and small, throughout the United States.[5]

educational opportunity

Part of the increased cost of public education is due to serving students who were not previously served (more special education students, more handicapped children, more limited English-speaking children) and providing more adequate services for children who received minimal services (children in poor states, especially lower class minority children). Serving these previously neglected students is usually more expensive than serving the middle class student enrolled in public education.

Serving students who were not previously served or who previously did not receive adequate services expands educational opportunity. There would seem to have been significant advances in educational opportunity in the past ten years, but with rising costs

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[4]Data presented or derived from Projection of Educational Statistics to 1985-86 National Center for Educational Statistics, 1977, Chapter II Enrollment and Chapter V Expenditures of Educational Institutions. Figures are approximate due to rounding in data presented (this may reduce the per pupil ADA estimates by as much as $200).

[5]Callahan, John J. et. al., Big City Schools: 1970-1975, A Profile of Changing Fiscal Pressures. 1977.

there are pressures to reduce educational costs and services. This, coupled with other factors (such as a general devaluing of academic knowledge and skills, poor job market for unskilled workers and college educated workers) has led to an emphasis on vocational training, especially for the lower class, and college preparatory courses for only the professional and upper class students and the very bright. This serves to restrict the educational opportunities of lower and middle class students, especially the lower class students.

The question is: How can we provide wide educational opportunity and an excellent educational program with limited resources?

Groups Which Influence Public Education/Control of Public Education

There are a number of groups which influence public education. In the state of Texas school districts are said to be locally controlled. This is to say that school policies are set by a locally elected school board and administered by a superintendent and his staff, and the local school district has the authority to raise funds by property taxes.

Local school districts are highly constrained in spending state and, to a lesser extent, federal funds. And local school districts are highly constrained by state laws and regulations concerning personnel staffing patterns, course offerings and curricular content. Local school districts, however, do have a major degree of leeway in spending locally appropriated funds over and above the local funds raised to qualify for state funds.

A free public education is not guaranteed by the federal or state constitutions, but it is guaranteed in Texas by state law. The state, primarily through the Foundation School Program, guarantees all citizens of the state a free public education. State laws and regulations cover most aspects of public education and the funds available for providing educational services. In general, this system of education, and financing of education, is comprehensive and balanced, and this provides a stable, dependable base for public education in Texas.

The state courts have always been involved in public education by ruling on the legality of laws affecting public education and by ruling on whether school districts and personnel were complying with the laws. More recently, federal legislation and consequent federal court decisions have had major effects on public education.

There are several problems with the use of the courts as a means of changing public education. Courts deal with problems in a piecemeal fashion; they do not consider the effects of decisions on the whole educational system. Courts mandate actions to be taken by school systems without consideration of the resources needed for such actions and the ability of school districts to obtain such resources. And more recently, federal legislation and consequent court decisions have begun to mandate student evaluation procedures and specific educational services. Public Law 92-142 mandates student evaluation procedures and specific educational services without regard to the resources of a school district. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 mandates equipping buildings for use by the handicapped, even if there are no handicapped students enrolled to use the building. Both laws do not address the disproportionate amount of funds to be spent for a very small number of students and the limited funds of most school districts.

There seem to be two developments that are resulting in a new status quo in public education. One is the role of the federal government, through legislation and court decisions, in influencing public education. The second is the potential for teacher organizations to alter the shape of public education.

Teacher organizations in the last few years have opposed administrator organizations in labor/management type interactions. Teachers must decide if it is in their best interest to adopt the attitudes and tactics of a union or to maintain the attitudes and tactics of a professional organization. Some argue that union tactics are the best way to promote the interests of teachers. Others argue that the use of such tactics will result in the loss of public support for education and the withdrawal of financial support. There is considerable interest in the direction that teacher organizations will take in the next few years.

References on the four general areas included the following: School Finance --Report of the Governor's Committee on Public School Education, 1968; Texas Public School Law Bulletin, 1975; House Bill 1126 of the 64th Texas Legislature; Senate Bill 1 of the 65th Texas Legislature; Rodriguez vs. San Antonio ISD: San Antonio ISD vs. Rodriguez; Wilson vs. Brockette; Mossy Oldsmobile vs. City of Houston, Texas; McClesky et al. 1975; Foster, 1977; Berke et al., 1976; Basic issues in Texas public school finance, 1975; Benson, 1975a, 1975b; Guthrie, 1975; Cohn, 1972; Crisis in school finance, 1977; Texas Public School Finance Plan: Explanations and Interpretations, TEA, 1977; Scope and Content of Education--Public Law 94-142, The Education of all Handicapped Children Act; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Martin, 1977; Kotin & Eager, 1977; Abeson & Zettel, 1977; Information Item - Public Law 94-142..Implications for Houston Independent School District; Quality of Education and Educational Opportunity--On Further Examination, 1977; Reisman, 1965; Broudy, 1977; Projections of educational statistics to 1985-86, 1977; Callahan, 1977; School finance reform, 1977; Bloom, 1974; Houston Labor Market Review, 1977; Anderson, et al., 1975; Texas Outlook, 1976; Influence Groups--Kraemer, et al., 1975; Branson & Steele, 1974; Tucker & Ziegler, 1977; Campbell & Mazzoni, 1976; Campbell, et al, 1975; Flygare, 1976; Berke & Moskowitz, 1976.

Results

On each issue respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they believed that an issue was currently an important issue. As can be seen in Table 7, most respondents thought that most of the issues were important. On the original version of the questionnaire the participants were also asked to list any other issue that was of major importance. These issues are listed in Table 8.

Issue 1: Fair Assessment of Tangible Wealth

Background

The most recent property values on which the Local Fund Assignment, the part of the Foundation School Program that must be paid for from local funds, is based are the G.O.E.R. (Governor's Office Education Resources) values. These values were collected on fourteen categories of property.

For some categories of property, notably single-family residences, up-to-date market values are available in most localities due to the frequent resale of homes. For other classes of property, e.g., commercial and industrial property, the tax assessor must accept the estimate of the company because he does not have the resources to evaluate the market value of the property.

"The most thorough study of valuation practices in Texas school districts was completed in 1975 by the Legislative Property Tax Committee. The Committee found that, as a rule, (1) high-value property is more under-valued than low-value property within each category of property and across all categories; (2) residential and small business properties are the least undervalued, while rural and industrial property are the most undervalued; and (3) undervaluation is greater and varies more widely in small rural districts than in the usually larger urban districts..." (Foster, IDRA Newsletter, October, 1977, p.11).

Issue

Should an effort be made to evaluate all categories of property considered by the G.O.E.R. study on a more equitable basis or is the present system the best practical system for evaluating property?

As can be seen in Table 7, all respondents considered the "assessment of tangible wealth" as a very important or important issue. The position of each group on this issue is listed in Table 9. Most groups favored the uniform assessment of all types of property. The TASA representative favored uniform assessment of property to determine the amounts of state funds a school district would receive under the Foundation School Program. The CHT representative favored the eliminating of real estate property taxes as a basis for funding public education. The HPA and TASSP representatives stated no position.

Comment

Most of the representatives stated that they favored uniform assessment of property. This implies the assessment of property at full market value, and implies that large businesses and corporations would pay a larger share of the school taxes and that home owners and small businesses would pay a smaller share than they currently pay. Any such legislation would be resisted by those who would pay increased taxes except for the rationale that it may be better to pay a slightly larger share now than risk a taxpayers revolt which might cause a greater shift in taxes to selected large businesses.

Issue 2: Taxing Intangible and Personal Wealth

Background

The Texas Constitution requires taxing of all classes of property by any property tax. Tax assessors typically do not attempt to assess and tax most intangible (e.g., stocks, bonds, cash) and personal (e.g., furniture, jewelry) property.

States that have attempted to tax such property have found that many citizens temporarily move their intangible wealth out of the state at tax time. Such taxation may also raise the question of double taxation.

Issue

Should intangible and personal property be taxed or should the Texas Constitution be amended so that only certain classes of property are taxed by property taxes?

As can be seen in Table 7, all but two of the participants considered "the taxation of intangible and/or personal property" to be an important or very important issue. The CHT representative did not rate this issue and the TASSP representative rated the issue as unimportant because it was not considered feasible to locate such property for tax purposes. The position of each group on this issue is listed in Table 10. The participants were divided in the responses they gave on this issue. It would seem that whether these groups would support the taxation of personal and/or intangible property would depend on the procedure adopted for taxing such property and the nature of the rest of the tax system.

Table 7

Current Importance of Issues

Groups	Issues			
	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	6. 7. 8. 9. 10.	11. 12. 13. 14. 15.	16. 17. 18. 19. 20
State				
TSTA	1, 1, 2, 2, 2	1, 2, 3, 2, 2	1, 2, 2, 3, 2	2, 2, 2, 2, 2
LWV	1, 2, 1, 2, 2	1, 2, 2.5, 2,1	- - - - -	- - - - -
TASA	1, 1, 1, 1, 2	2, 2, 2, 3, 2	1, 1, 2, 2, 2	2, 1, 1, 1, 2
TEA/PP	1, 1, 1, 1, 1	1, 1, 1, 1, 1	1, 1, 2, 2, 2	3, 2, 2, 2, 2
TCPT	1, 2, 2, 1, 2	1, 2, 1, 1, 2	2, 2, 2, 2, 2	2, 2, 2, 2, 4
TASSP	1, 4, 1, 2, 1	2, 1, 2, 1 -		
Local				
CHT	1, -, 1, 1, 1,	1, 1, 1, 1, -	1, 1, 1, 5, 1	1, 1, 1, 1, 3
HFT	1, 2, 1, 1, 1	1, 1, 1, 1, 1	- - - 4 -	2, 2, 1, 4, 2
GS/HISD	2, 1, 1, 2, 1	1, 2, 1, 2, 2	1, 1, 2, 1, 2	2, 1, -, 1, 2
LWV	1, 2, 1, 2, 2	1, 2, 2, 2, 1		
HPA	2, 2, 2, 1, 2	1, 2, 1, 2, 2		

Note: 1 = Very Important, 2 = Important, 3 = Neutral or Undecided, 4 = Unimportant, 5 = Very Unimportant.

Note: TSTA - Texas State Teachers Association, LWV-League of Women Voters, TASA-Texas Association of School Administrators, TEA (PP) - Texas Education Agency (Programs and Personnel), TCPT - Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers, TASSP - Texas Association of Secondary School Principals, CHT - Congress of Houston Teachers, HFT - Houston Federation of Teachers, GS/HISD - General Superintendent of the Houston ISD, HPA - Houston Principals Association.

Table 8

Other Major Issues Cited

Group-Issue
Congress of Houston Teachers -- (1) truancy, (2) giving different kinds of diplomas: academic, vocational, attendance, (3) alternative schools for students who do not benefit from the regular school program.
Texas Association of Secondary School Principals -- (1) better explanation of public education to public, (2) get parents to assume a larger responsibility for the education and control of their children, (3) help youth cope with everyday problems, (4) expansion of vocational - technical training.
Houston Federation of Teachers -- (1) class size, (2) collective bargaining for educational workers, (3) salary of educational [illegible], (4) labor relations in the public education sector.
Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers -- (1) [illegible] programs for gifted and talented students, (2) lower cla[illegible]hood education programs in grades K-12, (4) improve Texas teachers' salaries to national average.
Houston League of Women Voters -- (1) educational accountability, (2) the role of suburban school districts in the integration of urban school districts.

Table 9

Issue 1: Fair Assessment of Tangible Wealth

Position	Group
Valuation of property should be made uniform for all types of property.	TEA(PP), GS/HISD, HFT, H/LWV, T/LWV, PCPT, TSTA
Valuation of property should not be made uniform, since developments (e.g., new construction) should be encouraged by being given a lower property tax rate.	
Valuation of property is as good as it can practically be assessed.	
It is desirable to assess all types of property uniformly, but it is not currently feasible to change the assessment procedures.	
Other position (please state).	TASA- "Support the continued development of uniform standards for appraisal...to determine each district's local share of the foundation program." CHT- "Do away with property taxes (real estate) for financing schools."
No response	HPA, TASSP

Table 10

Issue 2: Taxing Intangible and Personal Wealth

Position	Groups
Personal and/or intangible property should be taxed.	TEA(PP), GS/HISD
Personal and/or intangible property should not be taxed.	CHT, HFT. TASSP - revise Texas consitution so that property is not taxed.
Some types of personal and/or intangible property should be taxed (e.g,. automobiles, boats, etc.) but not all property (e.g., furniture, stocks, bonds).	TSTA
It is desirable to tax personal and/or intangible property but it is not practical to do so.	
Other position (please state).	H/LWV- T/LWV- "The League supported the revised Constitution in 1975 which would have removed intangibles from the property tax base and made it easier to tax intangible property in another way." TCPT - no official position
No response.	TASA, HPA

Issue 3: Same Tax Rate for Different Forms of Wealth

Background

The Texas Constitution requires equal taxing of all forms of wealth. However, under Senate Bill 1 school districts may use different formulas for determining the rate at which different classes of property are taxed. Specifically, section 11.86 of SB 1 states that "open-space" land (e.g, land generally available for the production of farm crops or forest products or raising livestock) and agricultural land (land devo ed to agricultural purposes) may be assessed at less than market value.

It may be desirable to tax different classes of property at different rates, and in fact this is done (see Foster, IDRA Newsletter, Oct, 1977, pp. 10-12), but it is against state law. Tax laws are frequently used to encourage certain actions by the private economy. For example, lower tax rates on agricultural land promote agricultural production in Texas. On the other hand tax laws also frequently reflect the success of interest groups in shifting the burden of taxation to other groups. The rationale for lower tax rates on open-space land is that its market value does not reflect its productivity value. The same rationale, however, is not extended to the taxation of individual homes.

Issues

Should some classes of property be taxed at lower rates than others?

As can be seen in Table 7, all respondents considered "the same tax rate on all classes of property" as an important or very important issue. The position of each of the groups on this issue is presented in Table 11. The groups were divided on whether all classses of property should be taxed at the same rate. Action on this issue would probably depend on the procedures and rates proposed for taxing different classes of property, as well as the nature of the overall tax system.

Table 11

Issue 3: Same Tax Rate for Different Forms of Wealth

Position	Groups
All classes of property should be taxed at the same rate.	TCPT, TSTA (see below) GS/HISD
All classes of property should not be taxed at the same rate. Some classes of property (e.g., agricultural land, commerical property) should be taxed at a lower rate to promote such developments.	TEA(PP), TASSP, HFT (see below)
It is desirable to tax all classes of property at the same rate, but it is not currently feasible to change the tax rate procedures.	
Other position (please state).	H/LWV T/LWV - " The league is not opposed to taxing different forms of wealth at different rates so long as the constitution is changed and the different rates...are clearly stated and publicized so all taxpayers know what is being done." TSTA - "Fair assessment of property values should involve more than one factor; one of which could be productivity or return on investment, etc. However, once fairly assessed, all classes of property should be taxed at the same rate." CHT - " Do away with property taxes as a basis for school finance." HFT - "Different tax rates should be based on the productive value of property."
No response.	TASA, HPA

Issue 4: Property Value as a Measure of Fiscal Capacity: Determination of "Local Ability to Pay"

Background

Once the cost of the Foundation School Program has been determined for each district,[6] each district is then expected to finance a portion of the cost based on its "ability to pay" or the fiscal capacity of the area of the school district.

Prior to 1976 each district's ability to pay was measured by a complicated "economic index" which took into account varying local economic factors such as agriculture, mining and manufacturing activities; payrolls; and to a lesser extent each district's share of all property in the state.[7] The economic index came under increasing attack in the late 1960's and early 1970's due to the fact that it measured wealth which was not taxable by the school districts and hence, was not an accurate picture of the school district's ability to raise funds.

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[6]The local share of program cost will be computed on either the full-market value (G.O.E.R.) of property x 18¢ per $100 or the district's index values (G.O.E.R. Ag. Values) x 20½¢ per $100 whichever is less... No district's LFA shall exceed 125% of its prior year LFA." (Texas Public School Finance Plan: Explanations and Interpretations, TEA, Sept. 1977, p. 25).

[7]The formula for determining the amount of equalization aid a school district may receive is:

$$SEA = \left(1 - \frac{DLFA/ADA}{SLFA/ADA \times 1.25}\right) \times ADA \ (\$185 \text{ or } \$210)$$

where SEA is the state equilization aid, DLFA/ADA is the district's local fund assignment divided by the average daily attendance, SLFA/ADA is the total statewide local fund assignment divided by the ADA for the state, and ADA is the number of students in average daily attendance in the district. (Education Code 16.301).

Beginning with the 1976 school year, pursuant to HB 1126 of the 64th Texas Legislature, the method of determining local ability to pay was simplified. The economic index was eliminated and replaced by the market value of property in each district (as determined by a study conducted by the Governor's Office and known as the "Official Compilation" of Market Values). This estimate of the ability to pay takes into account various categories of taxable properties and does not include non-taxable categories of wealth such as payrolls and mining, manufacturing and agricultural activities. The Official Compilation did not include intangible property (such as stocks and bonds) and personal property (such as automobiles). The fact that intangible and personal property items were not included in the official compilation has led one court to conclude that the system for determining ability to pay is unconstitutional: Wilson v Brockette (July, 1977).

The present method for determining ability to pay, pursuant to SB 1 of the Texas Legislature, is similar to that of HB 1126. It uses more up-to-date market values and does not tax intangibles and most personal property, but "open space" land has been evaluated at approximately one-fifth its market value.

Aside from the issues of fair assessment of wealth, taxing intangible and personal property, and different tax rates for different classes of property, there is the issue of how best to assess the fiscal capacity of an area to support a school system.

Measures of fiscal capacity based on taxable property have the advantage of being more directly related to the school system's fund raising mechanism, the property tax. However, the use of this property tax has encouraged the liquidation of wealth and other practices to avoid the property tax. In general, individuals and corporations of great wealth are better able to avoid the property taxes than the homeowner or small businessman. An economic index may be a better measure of the ability of an area to support its school system than the market value of currently taxed property. This demonstrates the point that the ability of an area to support its school system is not the same as the ability of the school system to raise funds via property taxes.

Issue

Is the best measure of the amount a local school system should pay for public education the economic wealth and property of its area and constituency or the market value of the taxable property in its area?

As can be seen in Table 7, all respondents considered the "determination of local ability to pay" an important or very important issue. The position of each group on this issue is presented in Table 12. The groups were divided concerning the best measure of a local school district's ability to pay for public education. Decisions concerning which measure of fiscal capacity to use are probably dependent on other aspects of the educational system, such as the proportion of funds received through different funding sources and the mechanisms for obtaining funds.

Table 12

Issue 4: Determination of Local Ability to Pay

Position	Groups
The best measure of local ability to pay is an economic index for the school district area.	GS/HISD
The best measure of local ability to pay is the value of the taxable property for the school district area.	TEA(PP), TCPT, TSTA, TASSP
The best measure of local ability to pay is an economic index but property value is the best indicator of the funds a school district can actually raise.	
Other response (please state).	TASA-"take into consideration an adjustment for agricultural value and reports of the School Tax Assessment Practices Board."
	H/LWV, T/LWV - "it is fruitless to consider the best measure of local ability to pay until equitable assessment procedures have been developed."
	CHT - "The smaller districts...may not have the ability to finance their schools without some help from wealthier sections of the state. They should be willing to assume more of the burden than they have been doing."
	HFT - Both measures should be used.
No response.	HPA

Issue 5: Should a Smaller Proportion of the Funds Raised for Public Education be Raised by Property Taxes?

Background

Approximately 45% of the funds for operating a school district are raised locally, primarily by property taxes. Property taxes fall most heavily on those individuals and businesses that can not avoid property taxes in some manner. Wealthy individuals may liquify their assets and, if necessary to avoid state taxes, transfer them out of the state. Many large businesses and corporations may reduce their tax obligations by liquifying assets and by underestimating the value of their property. Large ranchers and farmers may take advantage of underestimated property values by the use of agriculture use values rather than market values. In these ways the weight of the property taxes may be shifted to homeowners, small businesses and large businesses that cannot liquify assets or take advantage of the tax assessor's inability to assess the large businesses (e.g., car dealers).

Approximately 45% of the funds for operating a school district are raised by the state. The large majority of these funds are based on sales taxes of one kind or another. The remaining 10% are federal funds derived primarily from income taxes on individuals and corporations.

The general public, of course, pays all taxes either directly or indirectly through the cost of goods and services. It would seem, however, that the property tax burden has been shifted to middle class homeowners, small businesses, and selected large businesses that cannot easily liquify their property or convince the tax assessor to accept an underestimated value for their business property. Inflation further amplifies these problems for retired individuals who own homes.

It is also the case that government services and taxes are greater in large cities than small cities. These taxes are also raised by property and sales taxes with the consequence that individuals in large cities are taxed more than individuals in small cities and thus are more reluctant to raise school taxes.

Table 13

Issue 5: Should a Smaller Proportion of the Funds Raised for Public Education be Raised by Property Taxes?

Position	Groups
A smaller proportion of the funds for public education should be raised by property taxes.	TASA (see below), TEA(PP), TCPT, TSTA, TASSP, GS/HISD, CHT, (see below), HFT (see below), HPA
The proportion of funds for public education raised by property taxes is about right.	
A larger proportion of funds for public education should be raised by property taxes.	
A smaller proportion of the funds for public education should be raised by property taxes but it is not currently feasible to change these proportions.	
Other position (please state).	TASA - increase state funds for FSP to 85-90% with full state funding of state mandated programs that are not included in the FSP. H/LWV, T/LWV - "League supports an increase in the level of state support...Local enrichment funds should be limited to 10% of the state program. We could support a state supervised property tax, a state income tax, a state corporate profits tax, or any combination thereof as sources of revenue for public schools. We also support supplementation of local district capital outlay by the state to equalize facilities." CHT - "Sales tax is the fairest tax there is because everyone who purchases something pays it. (Exclude those items presently excluded - food, prescription drugs, etc.)" HFT - "Against the use of property taxes for supporting public education. For equalization of public school financing through legislative action, possibly relying upon a corporate income tax, excess profits tax, commercial property tax, etc."
No response.	

In some parts of the country taxpayers have refused to approve funds for public education and the schools have been temporarily closed. In other parts of the country schools have continued to operate, by court order, on borrowed funds. In short, the groups which carry the weight of the property tax want their taxes reduced.

Issue

Should a smaller proportion of the funds for public education be raised by property taxes, and, if so, what alternative source of funds should replace them?

All the participants considered the "reliance on property taxes to support public education" as an important or very important issue. The position of each group on this issue is presented in Table 13. There was a strong consensus that a smaller proportion of the funds for public education should be raised by property taxes.

Issue 6: Equalization of Local and/or State Funds per Student

Background

In the state of Texas approximately 45% of the funds for school districts are raised locally. Part of the funds raised locally are for the Local Fund Assignment to pay for the local cost of the Foundation School Program. The Local Fund Assignment varies greatly but on the average is about 15% of the money raised locally (not including bond money). The other 85% of the locally raised funds are used to meet requirements not covered by the Foundation School Program. These funds are called "enrichment funds", although this is misleading since the Foundation School Program monies do not pay for all educational services mandated by state and federal law.

The ability of school districts to produce local revenues varies greatly. A school district with a relatively high property tax base per student may tax the property at a low rate and provide adequate funds for the school district. A school district with a relatively low property tax base per student may tax the property at a high rate and provide minimal funds for the school district.

In the state of Texas, school districts with below average wealth per pupil qualify for equalization aid. Under SB 1, a poor school district may receive up to $210 per student in average daily attendance. The extent to which equalization aid solves this problem is undetermined.

In an attempt to provide "equal" revenues for students regardless of whether they reside in property rich or property poor school districts, several proposals have been made. One is for the state to pay for a larger part of the educational program and thereby to avoid some of the inequities in local ability to raise funds (e.g., Full State Funding plans). Another proposal is for school districts to retain the option of fixing the rate at which they tax themselves, but for every school that taxes at a certain rate to receive the same revenues regardless of the wealth of the school district. Both approaches mean that rich school districts will pay for poor school districts.

Related to this issue of "equalizing" revenues for pupils from rich and poor districts are questions concerning the following: Will rich districts be limited or prohibited from spending enrichment funds?; Will adjustments be made for differences in the cost of goods and services throughout the state?; Will adjustments be made for high cost students?; etc.

Issue

To what extent should "equal" revenues per student be available regardless of the wealth of a school district?

All the participants considered "the equalization of funds per student" to be an important or very important issue. The position of each group is presented in Table 14. Most groups favored equal state funds per student for every school district with the same tax rate, assuming that different types of students would be funded at different rates (i.e., weighted-pupil finance plan). The question of local enrichment funds was not considered here.

Issue 7: Mainstreaming Special Education and Severely Handicapped Students[8]

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[8]The term "handicapped students" includes students with physical, mental or emotional handicaps; physically handicapped, blind and deaf students, pregnent students, mentally retarded, brain-injured, language and learning disabled, and emotionally disturbed.

Background

It is currently the policy in the state of Texas and a requirement of Public Law 94-142 to provide educational services to handicapped students in the "least restrictive environment." That is, these children, if at all possible, are to be educated in the classroom with regular education students. This is called mainstreaming and is believed by some to facilitate the development and education of handicapped students.

It has also been argued, not only that mainstreaming may not be beneficial for special students, but that it may interfere with the education of regular students.

Issue

Do students with severe intellectual, physical or social handicaps have the right to be educated with regular students, when this limits the guaranteed educational services provided to regular students?

All the participants considered "mainstreaming special education and severely handicapped students" to be an important or very important issue. The position of each group is presented in Table 15. The respondents were divided on this issue. Most participants would like to adequately serve both regular and special students but realize that there are conflicts in serving both groups of students in the same classroom. In this case some groups (H/LWV, T/LWV) tend to favor the special students and some groups (TASSP, CHT) tend to favor the regular students. One response to this dilemma, suggested by the HFT representative, was to adjust the pupil/teacher ratio, i.e., a weighted class size system.

Table 14

Issue 6: Equalization of Local and/or State Funds per Student

Position	Groups
Revenues (state and local) per student (or student type where some students, e.g., special education students, may receive more money per student) should be the same for every school district with the same tax rate regardless of the wealth of the school district.	H/LWV, T/LWV (see below), TCPT, TASSP, GS/HISD, CHT
Revenues per student should not be the same for every school district with the same tax rate.	TEA(PP)
Revenues per student should be the same for school districts with the same tax rate, but it is not currently feasible to implement such a school finance system.	
Other position (please state).	TASA - additional equalization aid to all districts below statewide average wealth per ADA provided that school districts are making an effective tax effort and distribute equalization aid on the basis of student need as well as property wealth per child. H/LWV, T/LWV - "The League supports equal access to quality education for all students. This does not mean equal dollars spent on each student. Since it costs more to educate some students than others, funds should be allocated to local school districts on a weighted-pupil basis." HFT - need for weighted-pupil finance plan.
No response.	HPA

Table 15

Issue 7: Mainstreaming Special Education and Severely Handicapped Students

Position	Groups
Students with severe handicaps have the right to be educated with regular students.	T/LWV, H/LWV
Students with severe handicaps do not have the right to be educated with regular students.	TASSP, CHT
Handicapped students who don't interfere with regular classroom procedures have the right to be educated with regular students, but those who would interfere do not have the right.	TEA(PP), TCPT, (see below)
While it would be desirable to educate all students in regular classrooms, it isn't practical to place severely handicappped students with regular students.	TEA(PP), TSTA, GS/HISD
Although some persons have advocated educating severely handicapped students with regular students, it really isn't the most beneficial form of education for students with special needs.	TEA(PP)
Other position (please state).	TCPT- "It is desirable to educate severely handicapped students in a regular classroom so long as it provides the best learning situation for both the handicapped and regular student." HFT- "Mainstreaming is a right of a handicapped student; however, regular education should not suffer. The solution in terms of adequate teacher-pupil contact is the weighted class size system." HPA- Handicapped students, if at all possible are to be educated in the regular classroom.
No response.	TASA

Issue 8: Funding Differences for Regular Education and Special Education

Background

Public education is not a right guaranteed by the federal or state constitutions, but is mandated by state law. In the state of Texas every citizen is guaranteed basic educational services by the Foundation School Program. The funds and services guaranteed by the Foundation School Program for each category of students are limited by state law and regulations. Additional funds and services may be provided by federal and local agencies.

Public Law 94-142 mandates a free public appropriate education for all handicapped students. It places no limitations on the financial obligation of the state or the local school districts to pay for such services. The implication of the current law is that there is no financial limitation on the obligation of state and local agencies to provide educational services for the handicapped, whereas the financial obligation to provide educational services to regular students is not addressed by federal law and is limited by state law.

The amount of money available for public education is limited. Unlimited spending for handicapped students will result in inadequate funds for mandated educational services for regular education students. Should some limit be placed on the financial obligation of school districts to pay for services for the handicapped?

Issue

Are the rights of regular education students being curtailed in an attempt to provide services for the handicapped? Should there be a limit on great disparities in per pupil funding for different categories of students?

Most of the participants considered "funding differences for regular and special education students" to be an important or very important issue. TSTA rated the importance of the issue as "neutral or undecided" and T/LWV rated the importance of the issue between "neutral or undecided" and "important". The position of each group is presented in Table 16. The groups were very divided on this issue or at least their interpretation of the issue. Without information on the cost of serving different categories of students and the number of students in each category, it is doubtful that the different participants would interpret the issue in the same manner.

Table 16

Issue 8: Funding Differences for Regular Education and Special Education

Position	Groups
There should be a limit placed on the financial obligation of school districts to pay for services for handicapped students.	TASSP
There should be no limit placed on the obligation of school districts to to provide services for its handicapped students.	TASA(see below), GS/HISD
School districts should provide as many services as finances permit after the basic programs for regular students have been provided.	TCPT, CHT
Although it would be desirable to have unlimited funding for special programs, it isn't financially feasible to have great disparities in per pupil expenditures.	TSTA, HPA
Other position (please state).	TASA- required state and federal programs should be accompanied by necessary funding. TEA(PP) and state funds should make up the difference in the cost of providing the services for the handicapped beyond ability to pay. H/LWV, T/LWV - "An equitable balance must be achieved between the two needs... Funds should be allocated to local school districts on -pupil basis with higher weights being given to those students who have special education needs." HFT - "...the burden of educating students should fall equally on all funding sources."
No response.	

Table 17

Issue 9: Responsibilities of State and Local Education Agencies

Position	Groups
Local school districts should provide all services (traditional services plus occupational and physical therapy, self-help skills training, medical, and psychological care, and full-time residential care) to special student groups under the supervision of the Texas Education Agency.	TEA(PP)
Local school districts should be responsible for providing traditional services and insuring that other services are provided by other agencies and facilities (e.g., Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Texas Department of Health Resources).	TCPT, HPA
Local school districts should be responsible for providing traditional services but should not be responsible for providing or insuring services through some other agency.	TSTA, GS/HISD, CHT
While it is desirable for the schools to expand services for special students, it is not feasible to do so at this time.	
Other position (please state).	H/LWV, T/LWV - "The problem needs to be clarified there should be a coordination of agencies to provide services."
	TASSP - "Should be up to the local school board."
	HFT - Schools should provide academic education --three r's-- and remedial education, job training, and job retraining if necessary.
No response	TASA

Issue 9: Responsibilities of State and Local Education Agencies

Bakcground

State and local education agencies have decided and/or have been mandated to take on increasing responsibilities for services. In addition to the traditional academic subjects taught to regular education students, they are held increasingly responsible for services appropriate for special student groups: handicapped children (physically, mentally, or emotionally handicapped and pregnant students), limited-English-speaking children, disadvantaged children, and delinquent children. Services (e.g., occupational and physical therapy, self-help skills training) for these children cover a great deal more than traditional academic subjects.

Public Law 94-142 has helped to raise the question of what the local school district should provide by indicating that occupational and physical therapy, self-help training skills for the retarded, and perhaps the cost of residential and medical care are services that the school district may be required to provide and/or to pay for. Some parents have interpreted PL 94-142 to mean that they may place their handicapped child in a full-time treatment facility and send the bill to the school district.

Issue

What services should local school districts be responsible for providing under the supervision of the Texas Education Agency?

Most of the participants rated the question of the "responsibilities of local school districts" as an important or very important issue. TSTA rated the current importance of this issue as "neutral or undecided." The position of each group is presented in Table 17. The groups were divided on this issue. The T/LWV stated, "The problem needs to be clarified and there should be a coordination of agencies to provide services."

Issue 10: Coordination of Services

Background

The scope of educational services deemed necessary today, especially for special student groups (e.g., exceptional children, low-income students), and the necessity to provide health and welfare services, as well as educational services, to many student groups makes the coordination of services highly desirable. For example, poor nutrition and health care are thought to contribute significantly to the number of mentally retarded and underachieving students in the United States. The trend is to expand nutrition and health care services in the schools. Poor home environments are also thought to contribute to the problems of many students from low-income families. These factors have led to the recommendation to include parents in the delivery of educational, health and nutrition services to their children and, in fact, to make some of these services available to the parents who also need them. These and other factors led to the trend to provide educational, health, and welfare services to both the parent and the child through the public schools. Although there are many agencies that exist to address the varied problems of low-income families and families with exceptional children, the public increasingly expects the public schools to provide the wide range of services needed by these families. One result of Public Law 94-142 mandating a free appropriate public education for handicapped students is that a number of agencies are considering dropping their services to handicapped and special children, dropping financial support for services offered through the schools, and/or expecting the public schools to pay for services offered through their agencies.

Issue

Which agency (school district, United Fund, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, Texas Department of Human Resource, Texas Department of Health Resources, Texas Department of MHMR) will provide which services (academic instruction, self-help skills training, medical evaluation and direct services, physical therapy, health services, etc.) and which will pay for the services?

Most participants rated the "coordination of services" as an important or very important issue. The CHT and TASSP represenatives did not rate the importance of this issue. The position of each group is presented in Table 18. Most of the groups agreed with the position that "Coordination of services is an important issue and additional legislation or voluntary action by agencies is needed to provide for the coordination of services." A study to clarify the needs for coordination, issues, constraints and alternative courses of action might be welcomed by these groups.

Table 18

Issue 10: Coordination of Services

Position	Groups
Coordination of services is an important issue but it can be handled by existing arrangements for coordination of services between agencies.	TASA
Coordination of services is an important issue and additional legislation or voluntary action by agencies is needed to provide for the coordination of services.	TEA(PP) - legislation needed. TCPT, TSTA, GS/HISD, T/LWV, HFT, HPA, H/LWV
Coordination of services is <u>not</u> currently a problem.	
Coordination of services is a problem but it is not practical to take action to improve this situation at this time.	
Other position (please state).	
No response.	TASSP, CHT

Issue 11: Cost of Education Versus Public Support of Education

Background

Americans generally support the concept of a public education for all the school age citizens of this country. However, several trends are operating to reduce public support for public education. Taxes for education have greatly increased due to inflation and expansion of education services. The tax burden has been shifted to the middle class (e.g., property tax on homes) and lower class (sales taxes). The academic achievement of students declined at the same time taxes were increasing. Declining enrollment in some school districts due to a drop in birthrate and/or "white flight" has contributed to a smaller tax base and larger per pupil costs. Greater enrollment and retention of high cost students, greater numbers of elderly citizens who are pressured by inflation to resist the higher costs of education, a generally recessed economy, moderate inflation, increased school taxes born by the middle and lower classes, and declining test scores all contribute to reduce public support of public education.

Housing patterns in most U. S. cities group individuals of different economic status and ethnic background. Dissatisfaction with public education may encourage the upper and upper-middle classes to move to the suburbs (although most Americans would prefer to live in the suburbs regardless of the status of public education). As a consequence, suburban districts may tax themselves at a high rate for public education but the cities, who have more of the "high cost" students, will be pressured to lower property taxes for education. Unless federal funds make up the difference, the result would be adequately financed suburban schools for the upper-middle and upper classes and inadequately financed city schools for the rest of the middle class and lower class.

Issue

Will the rising cost of education result in less public support of education?

As can be seen in Table 7, all the participants who rated the importance of this issue, "the rising cost of education may result in the loss of public support", thought it was a very important issue. The position of each group is presented in Table 19. Most groups took

the position that "if the cost of public education continues to rise, while student achievement remains low or declines, alternatives to public education will be sought", although the TASA and the HFT took the position that "if both services and cost of public education continue to increase, support for public education is likely to remain."

Table 19

Issue 11: Cost of Education versus Public Support of Education

Position	Groups
If the cost of public education continues to rise, while student achievement remains low or declines, alternatives to public education will be sought.	TEA(PP), T/LWV*, GS/HISD, CHT*, TCPTH/LWV
If the cost of public education continues to rise due to services for disadvantaged and special students, alternatives to public education will be sought.	CHT*
If the cost of public education increases while the services to students remain constant, parents will seek alternatives to public education.	CHT*
If services to all students are increased and the cost of public education continues to escalate, alternatives to public education will be sought.	CHT*
If both services and costs of public education continue to increase, support for public education is likely to remain.	TASA, HFT
Other alternative (please state).	TSTA - reduce local taxes CHT* - if costs rise, alternatives to public education will be sought.
No response	

*Multiple response were made. This seems to best represent the group position.

Issue 12: Educational Opportunity Versus Quality of Education

Background

The expansion of educational opportunity to all school age citizens is a major goal of public education. This refers to activities to enroll low-income and minority students and to encourage them to stay in school; efforts to provide services for special education students; and efforts to provide services to limited-English-speaking students. All of these students, except for minority groups such as Jewish students, are "high cost" students. That is, the per pupil cost of services for these students is higher, usually substantially so, than the per pupil cost of regular education students.

The expansion of educational opportunity usually requires a large increase in funds for public education or, to a lesser extent, funds may be shifted from programs for regular students to programs for "high cost" students. Most federal funds and an increasing proportion of state and local funds are devoted to expanding educational opportunities for high cost students.

These students have historically been neglected by public education (Weinberg, Minority Students: A Research Appraisal, NIE, 1977) and there is a great need to expand services to these students. The goal of public education is to provide a high quality education to all students. The difficulty is limited resources and knowledge of how to provide these services. The issue is how to allocate resources in an equitable manner to move toward a high quality education for all students.

Issue

What allocation of resources among "high cost" and regular students will promote the highest standard of education for all student groups?

As can be seen in Table 7, the participants considered "educational opportunity versus quality of education" to be an important or very important issue. The position of each group is presented in Table 20. Several of the participants took the position that we can afford to provide for all student needs, while others (TSTA, TCPT, GS/HISD) thought that some limit on expenditures for "high cost" students should exist.

Table 20

Issue 12: Educational Opportunty versus Quality of Education

Position	Groups
Resources should be allocated first to "high cost" students where the need is greatest.	T/LWV*
Allocate resources to some "high cost" students, but not to other "high cost" groups.	
Distribute resources to both "high cost" and regular students but limit expenditures on "high cost" students so as not to exceed a certain amount, e.g., six times the amount spent on a regular student.	TSTA, GS/HISD, TCPT
Allocate local resources equally between regular and "high cost" groups and use federal funds to meet the additional needs of "high cost" students.	
In order to provide educational opportunity to the greatest number, first allocate resources to regular students, then allot additional funds to those requiring supplemental services.	CHT
Given the wealth of the nation as a whole, all services should be provided to students commensurate with their needs and the financial resources can be found to accomplish this.	TASA, TEA(PP), T/LWV*, HFT, H/LWV
Other alternative (please state).	
No response.	

*Note multiple responses or coding of multiple responses.

Issue 13: Strategies for School Desegregation

Background

Since the 1954 Supreme Court decision in Brown versus The Board of Education, school districts throughout the United States have used various methods to implement school desegregation. The results of their attempts to desegregate have often led to results which may be considered more harmful than the problem being treated. Spiraling costs, white flight and violence, often ascribed to racial desegregation, have left many school districts broken both financially and educationally.

School districts have the responsibility to provide educational programs to all students in settings which are integrated. That no one method for implementation of school desegregation provides a panacea and that no single approach is applicable in every situation is a notion only now receiving attention.

Early in the search for meaningful desegregation, simplistic, extremely unpopular strategies were imposed on school districts by courts. These strategies, usually including forced transportation of students from neighborhood schools to schools of other racial majorities, led to great changes in school district population and support. More recently, strategies of a more subtle nature, such as Magnet Schools, single grade schools, and elective transfer plans have been attempted. The newer strategies appear to hold promise in that they are less passionately supported and/or opposed by most communities.

Issue

What desegregation strategy or combination of strategies will offer maximum educational opportunity to minority students while minimizing white flight and reduction of community support for public education?

As can be seen in Table 7, the participants considered "strategies for school desegregation" an important or very important issue. The position of each group is presented in Table 21. The groups supported a combination of desegregation strategies. The most popular strategies were "elective transfer plans" and "Magnet Schools." The least popular strategies were "forced transportation of students" and "school pairing."

Table 21

Issue 13: Strategies for School Desegregation

Position	Groups
Only the more straightforward attempts at desegregation, such as forced transportation of students, will be effective.	T/LWV*
Magnet Schools represent an effective desegregation strategy while sustaining community support for public education.	CHT*, HFT, GS/HISD*, T/LWV, TCPT* H/LWV*
Single grade schools are a viable program for providing equal educational opportunity.	GS/HISD*, T/LWV*, TCPT *, H/LWV*
Elective transfer plans are worthwhile and should be developed within a district.	TEA(PP), TSTA, CHT*, GS/HISD*, TCPT* T/LWV*, H/LWV*
School pairing or clustering is a desegregation strategy which is likely to have merit.	T/LWV*, TCPT*
The metropolitan plan, i.e. co-operative interchange between urban and suburban districts is an effective method for achieving integration	GS/HISD*, T/LWV*, H/LWV*
Other alternative (please state whether to be used in combination with other strategies).	TASA - "Strategies for school desegregation will vary from district to district as the district is challenged." T/LWV - strategies 1 to 6 may be effective. GS/HISD - strategies 2, 3, 4, and 6 may be effective. TCPT - all are acceptable, favor 2, 3, 4, and 5. H/LWV not against positions 1 and 5 but prefer to concentrate on 2, 3, 4, and 6 at this time.
No response.	

*Note multiple responses.

Issue 14: Longer School Day and/or School Year

Background

The general public is concerned with reports that students are not achieving at the same level today that they were several years ago and that many high school graduates are not prepared to go to work or to continue their education.

This contrasts with general agreement that individuals in today's society need a greater range and depth of knowledge and skills to function successfully in a more complex society.

Fewer students drop out of school before graduating from high school now than previously. This is an increase in educational opportunity. However, a large percentage of these students are not prepared for skilled work or to continue their education.

It is generally agreed (Bloom, American Psychologist, 1974, 29, 682-688.) that the acquisition of knowledge and skills is based in large part on the amount of time a student spends studying. If students are to be better educated to meet the needs of living in today's society, it would seem that they will have to spend more time studying.

Issue

Should the opportunity for an extended school day and/or an extended school year be made available to students in public schools?

As can be seen in Table 7, participants varied in the importance they placed on the issue of a "longer school day and/or school year." Four groups rated the issue as important or very important, one group was neutral, and two groups considered the issue as unimportant or very unimportant. The position of each group is presented in Table 22. The groups were divided on this issue. The groups which opposed an increase in class time were more opposed to an increase in the school year than to an increase in the school day.

Table 22

Issue 14: Longer School Day and/or School Year

Position	Groups
The opportunity for both an extended school day and extended school year should be available to students.	TEA(PP), T/LWV, GS/HISD, H/LWV
The opportunity for an extended school day, but not an extended school year, should be available to students.	HFT
The opportunity for an extended school year, but not an extended school day, should be available to students.	TCPT
Both the current school day and school year should remain as they are.	TSTA
Other alternative (please state).	TASA - "The length of the school year should remain the same (we have no position on the length of the school day)." CHT - "175 day, 5 inservice, 7½ hours per day."
No response.	

*Note multiple response or coding of multiple responses.

Issue 15: Expansion of Vocational Educational

Background

The need for unskilled labor in the United States has decreased over the last fifty years. Most major employers have a supply of applicants for unskilled work and a deficiency of applicants for skilled work in selected areas. "The strong demand for executive secretarial and skilled clerical help continues to stay high in all industries throughout the Houston area. Also remaining at a high level is the need for skilled mechanics, machinists, craftsmen, and professionals. Those individuals seeking employment in the Houston area who are lacking skills and/or training will face many problems in obtaining and holding meaningful employment..." (Houston Labor Market Review, Texas Employment Commission, November, 1977).

The expectations of today's high school graduates for meaningful employment are also greater. For example, on a recent survey of high school seniors in HISD many students expressed the expectation to go to college and obtain professional positions. They expressed these expectations in grammatically incorrect sentences with many misspelled words. There are greater educational opportunities today and the need for high educational standards is greater than at any point in our history.

Issue

Should there be increased effort to provide vocational education to prepare students for skilled labor jobs upon graduating from high school?

As can be seen in Table 7, participants considered the "expansion of vocational education" to be an important or very important issue. The positions of the groups are presented in Table 23. All groups supported the expansion of vocational education of all types to prepare students for skilled employment.

Issue 16: Competency Testing Versus Normative Testing

Background

Many groups, especially minority groups, have been critical of standardized tests. One of the main criticisms is that standardized tests are culturally biased. Many educators also are critical of standardized tests. One of the main criticisms is that such tests may not match the curriculum of a particular school district. Many educators would prefer a test that is based on the curriculum of the school. Criticisms of standardized tests have led to the development of criterion referenced tests and/or competency tests. Such tests are designed to be related to the curriculum of a particular school, and the level of performance on such tests is"... interpreted by rationally or empirically established standards of attainment rather than comparison with the performance of some reference group of people ..." (Anderson et. al., Encyclopedia of Educational Evaluation, 1975, p. 100).

The general public is receptive to competency tests, which are designed to measure such real world skills as the ability to calculate a utility bill, but the public also wants to know how the performance of students in their school district compares with the performance of other students in the state and the nation.

Competency tests have two general disadvantages when compared with standardized tests: because of their "real world" nature they are more likely than normative tests to be culturally biased, and setting standards of achievement on competency tests without the use of comparison groups may be difficult to justify. Other problems with competency tests are that they do not lend themselves to comparison with other student groups (although equivalency scores may be estimated for performance on different tests), competency tests are usually tests of minimum performance and thus will not be very useful for predicting future achievement, and competency tests are usually developed by school districts which rarely validate the tests they produce. Advantages of competency tests are their "real world" appeal of being relevant to living in our society and they are more likely to match the curriculum of the school.

Issue

Should competency tests replace normative tests?

As can be seen in Table 7, participants considered "competency testing versus normative testing" to be somewhat less important than some of the other issues, but still an important issue. The position of each group is presented in Table 24. Most groups thought that "both competency tests and normative tests should be used to assess the educational progress of students."

Table 23

Issue 15: Expansion of Vocational Education

Position	Groups
There should be an increased effort to provide vocational education of all types to prepare students for skilled labor jobs upon graduation from high school.	TASA, TEA(PP), T/LWV, TSTA, GS/HISD, CHT*, HFT, TCPT, H/LWV
There should be a concentrated effort to provide secretarial and clerical education to students to meet industrial employment demands.	
There should be a concentrated effort to provide vocational training for mechanics, machinists, and craftsmen to fill the need for skilled laborers.	
Instead of expanding vocational education, there should be an expanded effort to provide sufficient academic training for all students, so that those desiring a college education can qualify, gaining profesional skills on the college level.	
While it would be desirable to expand vocational education, it is not financially feasible at this time.	
Other alternative (please state).	
No response.	

*Note multiple response or coding of multiple responses.

Table 24

Issue 16: Competency Testing Versus Normative Testing

Position	Groups
Competency tests should replace normative tests as a basis for assessing the educational progress of students.	
Competency tests should not be used to assess the educational progress of students.	
Both competency tests and normative tests should be used to assess the educational progress of students.	TEA(PP), TSTA, GS/HISD, CHT, HFT TCPT (see below)
Neither competency tests nor normative tests should be used to assess the progress of students.	
Other alternatives (please state).	T/LWV - undecided or neutral TCPT - Neither competency tests nor normative tests should be used for promotion or graduation. H/LWV -"Normative tests, criterion referenced tests, and comprehensive student evaluations should be used to assess the educational progress of students."
No response.	TASA

Issue 17: Competency Testing, Accountability and Public Support of Education

Background

The general public is concerned with reports of declining test scores, especially when school taxes are higher than ever before, and believes the school systems should be accountable for the academic achievement of its students.

The present trend is to substitute locally developed competency tests for standardized tests and to require certain minimum standards for promotion and graduation (cf., Committee on Educational Goals, chaired by Rep. Al Brown of the Texas House Public Education Committee: Texas Outlook, Nov. 1976, p. 23). Developments in the state of Florida are a good example of this trend. The results of competency testing in Florida were generally as poor as would have been found with standardized tests. Although the public supports the attempt to set standards, the current results of the competency tests probably have not increased public support for education.

Issue

Will competency testing result in greater support of public education?

As can be seen in Table 7, participants considered "competency testing and public support" to be an important or very important issue. The positions of the groups are presented in Table 25. The groups supported the use of both competency tests and normative tests or the development of competency tests with statewide norms of achievement to assess school effectiveness.

Table 25

Issue 17: Competency Testing, Accountability and Public Support of Education

Position	Groups
Competency tests should replace normative tests as a measure of school success in measuring the effectiveness of schools.	
Competency tests should not be used as a measure of school success for accountability purposes.	
Both competency tests and normative tests should be used to assess school effectiveness for accountability purposes.	TEA(PP), GS/HISD, CHT
Neither type of test should be used to assess the success of schools.	TCPT
Competency tests should be developed on a statewide basis which can be normed to provide a statewide normative group for interpreting the competency tests.	TSTA, HFT
Other alternatives (please state).	T/LWV - undecided or neutral
No response	TASA

Issue 18: Federal Legislation of Public School Programs

Background

While the federal government does not guarantee education as a right of its citizens, it has passed extensive legislation mandating the quality and breadth of educational programs. Recent legislation extends to aspects of education (e.g., evaluation of students, teacher training) that traditionally have been the responsibility of state and local school officials.

In 1973 a U. S. district court ruled that Denver schools must be desegregated, citing the U. S. Supreme Court decision Keyes v. School District No.1, Denver, Colorado. The district court rejected proposed desegregation plans submitted by both the school board and the plaintiffs. The court, with the help of experts, then devised its own plan. The court's plan was appealed to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals by the Denver School Board. The Tenth Circuit Court affirmed the right of the district court to remove obstacles to effective desegregation. However, it reversed the order to implement the district court's specific plan, which "would impose upon school authorities a pervasive and detailed system for the education of minority children". In summation, the court stated "the task of operating the schools, we re-emphasize, is for local school authorities...".

In Boston under similar circumstances, the district court's plan for school desegregation was upheld by the First Circuit Court, citing that the Boston School Committee was obstructing meaningful desegregation. These two cases show the varying degrees of government involvement and the flexible parameters of constitutional authority. (Flygare, Thomas S. "Schools and the Law". Phi Delta Kappan, April, 1976, pp, 550-1).

Issue

Can federal laws mandate aspects of education that have traditionally been the responsibility of state and local school officials and can federal courts mandate such specific procedures if such procedures cannot be shown to violate the federal constitution?

As can be seen in Table 7, the participants considered "federal legislation of public school programs" an important or very important issue. The position of each group is presented in Table 26. The groups were divided on this issue but most agreed with the position that "The federal government and the federal courts may rule certain practices illegal but should not state the specific practices for complying with federal law."

Table 26

Issue 18: Federal Legislation of Public School Programs

Position	Group
The federal government and the federal courts may rule certain practices illegal and/or may state the specific educational procedures for complying with the law.	T/LWV, H/LWV
The federal government and the federal courts may rule certain practices illegal but should not state the specific practices for complying with federal law.	TASA, TEA(PP), TSTA, GS/HISD
The federal government may pass any law concerning public education and it is binding on all educational institutions.	
The federal government may not pass laws concerning public education per se, but only deal with matters concerning equal educational opportunities unless an amendments is made to the U.S. Constitution.	CHT, HFT, TCPT
Other alternatives (please state).	
No response.	

Issue 19: Adversary Relationship Between Teachers and Administrators versus Public Support of Education

Background

There is currently some debate concerning whether teacher organizations should adopt union tactics to increase the salaries and benefits of teachers (cf., Phi Delta Kappan Fastback #21). It is argued on the one hand that such tactics are the most effective means of furthering the interests of teachers and on the other hand that an adversary relationship between teachers and school administrators will result in the loss of public support for public education. The loss of public support for public education would probably result in the defeat of bond issues for school construction and the reduction in funds for the operation of the public schools.

Issue

Would the adoption of union tactics by teacher organizations result in the loss of public support for the schools?

As can be seen in Table 7, the participants with the exception of the HFT representative, considered an "adversary relationship between teachers and administrators versus public support of education" to be an important or very important issue. The position of each group is presented in Table 27. The HFT was the only group to support the position that union tactics should be adopted by teacher organizations. The majority of the groups thought that the "Adoption of union tactics by teacher organizations would result in the loss of public support for the schools and should be avoided."

Table 27

Issue 19: Adversary Relationship Between Teachers and Administrators versus Public Support of Education

Position	Group
Adoption of union tactics by teacher organizations would result in the loss of public support for the schools and should be avoided.	TASA (see below), TEA(PP), GS/HISD, CHT, TCPT
Adoption of union tactics by teacher organizations would not result in the loss of public support for the schools and should be pursued.	HFT
While adoption of union tactics by teacher organizatons would probably result in the loss of public support for the schools such tactics should be pursued in order to maintain the teaching staff.	
While adoption of union tactics by teachers organizations would probably not result in the loss of public support for the schools, such tactics should be avoided as inappropriate conduct for the groups.	TSTA
Other opinions (please state).	TASA - "Support the preservation of existing statutory provisions regarding employee relations, which recognize the authority of locally elected boards of education." T/LWV - neutral or undecided

Issue 20: Strengthening the Texas Education Agency

Background

Most state education agencies, including the Texas Education Agency, receive more than half of their funds from the federal government (Berke & Moskowitz, 1976 in 1976 Review of Research in Education). It is also generally the case that employees of TEA, from the Commissioner of Education on down, are not paid at a level commensurate with their colleagues in other institutions.

Many problems faced by public education today can best be addressed at the state level rather than by local school systems or the federal government. The failure to take the lead in solving educational problems creates additional problems.

Issue

Should state funds for the Texas Education Agency be increased and should the salaries of its employees be made commensurate with their associates in other institutions?

As can be seen in Table 7, participants considered "strengthening the Texas Education Agency" as perhaps less important than some of the other issues but nonetheless an important issue. The position of each group is presented in Table 28. The majority of the groups supported strengthening the TEA. The T/LWV and the CHT were neutral or undecided on this issue, and the HFT and TCPT did not favor strengthening the TEA.

Table 28

Issue 20: Strengthening the Texas Education Agency

Position	Groups
State funds for the TEA should be increased but the salary levels should not be.	
State funds for the TEA should be increased and the salaries of its employees raised.	TEA(PP), TSTA, GS/HISD, TASA (see below)
State funds for the TEA do not need to be increased; nor do the salaries of its employees.	HFT, TCPT
While it would be worthwhile to strenghen the TEA, it is not financially feasible to do so at this time.	
Other opinion (please state).	TASA - "Funds should be adequate to enable TEA to finance its functions as mandated by law. Salaries should be commensurate with responsibilities and at such a level to attract the most highly competent personnel. The Commissioner of Education should be paid a salary commensurate with the salary paid to university presidents and superintendents of schools." T/LWV - neutral or undecided CHT - neutral or undecided
No response.	

Legislation Related to Issues

Participants were asked to cite any current or proposed legislation related to each issue. Legislation cited by participants is listed in Table 29. Other legislation and court cases related to these issues include the following: HB 1126 and SB 1 (the school finance bills of the 64th and 65th Texas Legislative sessions); Rodriguez v San Antonio ISD; San Antonio ISD v Rodriguez; Wilson v Brockette; Mossy Oldsmobile v City of Houston, Texas; Public Law 94-142, The Education of All Handicapped Children Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Table 29

Legislation

Issue	Group	Legislation
Issue 1	T/LWV	HB 846 (65th Texas Legislature) same as Peveto Bill
	T/LWV	Peveto Bill (65th Legislature) uniform property tax code (full market value), uniform appraisal of all property by one county-wide unit, sets standard for tax assessors, etc.
	HFT	Peveto Bill
	H/LWV	Peveto Bill
Issue 2	T/LWV	Revised Texas Constitution 1975 (would have removed intangibles from the property tax base and made it easier to tax intangible property in another way)
Issue 3	T/LWV, H/LWV	Constitutional Revision in 1975
	T/LWV, H/LWV	Sen. Creighton's bill (65th Texas Legislature) to tax agricultural land on productivity.
Issue 10	HFT	Comprehensive Employment Training Act
Issue 11	CHT	Proposition 13, (1978) passing in California
Issue 16	TCPT	Lee Jackson has drafted a competency testing bill.

Limitations of Study

The major limitation of this study was the poor response rate. Only 5 of the 13 offices, groups, or organizations identified as being most influential at the local level (see Table 5) participated in the study (GS/HISD, HPA, HFT, CHT, H/LWV), and only 6 of the 17 (TEA counted twice, once for each major division) offices, groups, or organizations at the state level (see Table 6) participated in the study (TASA, TEA(PP), T/LWV, TCPT, TSTA,TASSP). Thus, we do not know the position of the majority of the groups identified as being most influential on the issues considered in this study.

A second limitation of this study is that the participants did not expand on their reasons for choosing a position. Another limitation is that the position a group takes on some issues is dependent on the overall system being considered. For example, the position one might take on the best measure of local ability to finance schools probably depends on the extent to which public education is dependent on local sources of revenue rather than state or federal sources of revenue, etc.

The responses of the participants in this Policy Study of Educational Issues are of interest and may be used along with other information to anticipate legislative action concerning public education in the next session of the Texas Legislature. The small number of participants and the restricted nature of their responses, however, cause one to be wary of making predictions on the basis of the results of this study.

Summary

A Policy Study of Educational Issues was conducted to determine the position of those groups, identified as being most involved in public education, on current issues in public education. These groups are listed in Tables 5 and 6. Only 11 of the 30 groups who were requested to participate in the study stated their positions on the issues presented.

In brief, the results of the study are the following: (1) Most groups favored the uniform assessment of all types of property -- this implies assessing property at market value; (2) the participants were divided on the issue of taxing intangible and/or personal property -- whether these groups would support the taxation of personal and/or intangible property would depend on the procedures adopted for taxing such property and the nature of the rest of the tax system; (3) the groups were divided on whether all classes of property should be taxed at the same rate --action on this issue would probably depend on the procedures and rates proposed for taxing different classes of property; (4) the groups were divided concerning the best measure of a local school district's ability to pay for public education --decisions concerning which measure of fiscal capacity to use are probably dependent on other aspects of the educational system, such as the proportion of funds received from different funding sources and types of taxes; (5) there was a strong consensus that a smaller proportion of the funds for public education should be raised by property taxes; (6) most groups favored equal state funds per student for every school district with the same tax rate, assuming that different types of students would be funded at different rates (i.e., weighted-pupil finance plan); (7) the respondents were divided on the issue of maintstreaming severely handicapped students-- most participants would like to adequately serve both regular and special students but realize that there are conflicts in serving both groups of students in the same classroom; (8) the groups were very divided on the issue of funding differences between regular and special students -- without information on the cost of serving different categories of students and the number of students in different categories, it is doubtful that the different groups would interpret the issue in the same manner; (9) the groups were divided concerning the services they thought public education should provide-- there is a need for clarification of this issue for solutions to be sought; (10) most groups agreed that "Coordination of services is an important issue and additional legislation or voluntary action by agencies is needed to provide for the coordination of services"; (11) most groups took the position that "if the cost of public education continues to rise, while student achievement remains low or declines, alternatives to public education will be sought", although others took the position that "if both services and the cost of public education continue to rise, support of public education is likely to remain"; (12) on the issue of allocation of resources between "high cost" and regular students, several of the participants took the position that we can afford to provide for all student needs, while others thought that some limit on expenditures for "high cost" students should exist; (13) the groups supported a combination of desegregation strategies - the most popular strategies were "elective transfer plans" and "Magnet schools"- the least popular strategies were "forced transportation of students" and "school pairing"; (14) the groups were divided on the issue of increasing the school day and/or the

school year; (15) all groups supported the expansion of vocational education of all types to prepare students for skilled employment; (16) most groups thought that both competency tests and normative tests should be used to assess the educational progress of students; (17) to assess school effectiveness the groups supported the use of both competency tests and normative tests or competency tests with statewide norms; (18) the groups were divided on the issue of the authority of the federal government concerning educational programs, but most agreed with the position that "the federal government and the federal courts may rule certain practices illegal but should not state the specific practices for complying with federal law"; (19) the majority of the groups thought that the "adoption of union tactics by teacher organizations would result in the loss of public support for the schools and should be avoided." It seems especially important that most groups favored the uniform assessment of property (issue 1), there was a strong consensus that a smaller proportion of the funds for public education should be raised by property taxes (issue 5), most groups favored equal state funds per student for school districts with the same tax rate (issue 6), most groups were divided concerning the services they thought public schools should provide (issue 9), most groups thought coordination of services was important and that action in this area was needed (issue 10) all groups supported the expansion of vocational education (issue 15), and the majority of the groups thought that the adoption of union tactics by teacher ogranizations would result in the loss of public support for schools.

Use for Educational Planning

Public education is largely affected by legislation, court decisions, government regulations, policy decisions by school boards, the actions of interest groups, etc. To plan to respond to these demands or to influence these demands one must be able to anticipate future legislation, court decisions, etc. This is to say that one may subjectively estimate the results of future requirements and the probablity of such requirements being enacted.

Many sources of information are useful in determing what actions may be taken and the probability of their becoming a requirement for public education (see Urbina & Alston, 1977). A straightforward procedure for obtaining information on possible future demands for public education is to identify those groups who are most influential in determining public school policy and legislation and ask them their position on educational issues.

Policy studies (cf., Turoff, 1975) may be conducted in several ways. The present study was designed to allow the participants the opportunity to consider each others position and modify their position. Unlike the typical Delphi study, however, no attempt to produce a consensus of the groups was intended. The purpose was to explore the issues and obtain information on possible future requirements of public education.

The poor response rate on this study makes any predictions based on this study tenuous. For illustrative pruposes, however, we may consider some of the results of this study.

The fact that most groups favored the uniform assessment of property (issue 1) and that there was a strong consensus that a smaller proportion of the funds for public education should be raised by property taxes (issue 5), coupled with the recent passage of Proposition 13 in California and Governor Briscoe's deisire to pass a tax reduction bill before he leaves office, suggest that a smaller proportion of the funds for public education may be raised through property taxes in the coming biennium. The fact that most groups favored equal state funds per student for school districts with the same tax rate (issue 6) implies that the movement for more equalization money may make additional progress in the next biennium. The fact that most groups were divided concerning the services they thought public schools should provide (issue 9) and that most groups thought coordination of services was important and that action was needed in this area may mean that a study of these related problems would be welcomed. Although the groups who participated in this study are not likely to champion these causes, they did think that vocational education should continue to be expanded (issue 15) and that the Texas Education Agency should be strengthened (issue 19). It may also be important to note that the majority of the groups were against the adoption of union tactics by teacher organizations because it would result in a loss of public support for the schools.

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POLICY STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

PART I

Please return this questionnaire to the following address:

Dr. Herbert L. Alston
Houston Independent School District
Research and Evaluation
3830 Richmond Avenue
Houston, Texas 77027

A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Contents

SCHOOL FINANCE ISSUES

1. Fair assessment of tangible wealth
2. Taxing intangible and personal wealth
3. Same tax rate for different forms of wealth
4. Property value as a measure of fiscal capacity
5. Reliance on property tax for public education funds
6. Equalization of local and/or state funds per student

SCOPE AND CONTENT OF EDUCATION ISSUES

1. Mainstreaming
2. Funding differences for regular education and handicapped students
3. Services local school districts should provide
4. Coordination of services

To facilitate future correspondence, please give the name and title of the person or persons who completed this form. The name of these individuals will not be reported in the study.

Name: Title:

SCHOOL FINANCE ISSUES

Issue 1: Fair Assessment of Tangible Wealth

Issue

Should an effort be made to evaluate all categories of property considered by the G.O.E.R. study on a more equitable basis or is the present system the best practical system for evaluating property?

Questions

A. Please rate the extent to which you agree that "the assessment of tangible wealth" is currently an important issue.

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. Valuation of property should be made uniform for all types of property.

_____ 2. Valuation of property should not be made uniform. Some developments (e.g., new construction) should be encouraged by being given lower property tax rates.

_____ 3. Valuation of property is as good as it can practically be assessed.

_____ 4. It is desirable to assess all types of property uniformly, but it is not currently feasible to change the assessment procedures.

_____ 5. Other position (please state).

_____ 6. No response.

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

Issue 2: Taxing Intangible and Personal Wealth

Issue

Should intangible and personal property be taxed or should the Texas Constitution be amended so that only certain classes of property are taxed by property taxes?

Questions

A. Please rate the extent to which you agree that "the taxation of intangible and/or personal property" is currently an important issue.

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. Personal and/or intangible property should be taxed.

_____ 2. Personal and/or intangible property should not be taxed.

_____ 3. Some types of personal and/or intangible property should be taxed (e.g., automobiles, boats, etc.) but not all property (e.g., furniture, stocks, bonds).

_____ 4. It is desirable to tax personal and/or intangible property but it is not practical to do so.

_____ 5. Other position (please state).

_____ 6. No response.

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

Issue 3: Same Tax Rate for Different Forms of Wealth

Issue

Should some classes of property be taxed at lower rates than others?

Questions

A. To what extent do you believe that the "same tax rate on all classes of property" is currently an important issue?

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. All classes of property should be taxed at the same rate.

_____ 2. All classes of property should not be taxed at the same rate. Some classes of property (e.g., agricultural land, commercial property) should be taxed at a lower rate to promote such developments.

_____ 3. It is desirable to tax all classes of property at the same rate, but it is not currently feasible to change the tax rate procedures.

_____ 4. Other position (please state).

_____ 5. No response.

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

SCHOOL FINANCE ISSUES

Issue 4: Property Value as a Measure of Fiscal Capacity: Determination of "Local Ability to Pay"

Issue

Is the best measure of the amount a local school system should pay for public education the economic wealth and property of its area and constituency or the market value of the taxable property in its area?

A. Please rate the extent to which you agree that "local ability to pay" is currently an important issue.

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. The best measure of local ability to pay is an economic index for the school district area.

_____ 2. The best measure of local ability to pay is the value of the taxable property for the school district area.

_____ 3. The best measure of local ability to pay is an economic index but property value is the best indicator of the funds a school district can actually raise.

_____ 4. Other response (please state).

_____ 5. No response.

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

SCHOOL FINANCE ISSUES

Issue 5: Should a Smaller Proportion of the Funds Raised for Public Education be Raised by Property Taxes?

Issue

Should a smaller proportion of the funds for public education be raised by property taxes, and, if so, what alternative source of funds should replace them?

Questions

A. Please rate the extent to which you agree that "reliance on property taxes to support public education" is currently an important issue.

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. A smaller proportion of the funds for public education should be raised by property taxes.

_____ 2. The proportion of funds for public education raised by property taxes is about right.

_____ 3. A larger proportion of funds for public education should be raised by property taxes.

_____ 4. A smaller proportion of the funds for public education should be raised by property taxes but it is not currently feasible to change these proportions.

_____ 5. Other position (please state).

_____ 6. No response.

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

SCHOOL FINANCE ISSUES

Issue 6: Equalization of Local and/or State Funds per Student

Issue

To what extent should "equal" revenues per student be available regardless of the wealth of a school district?

Questions

A. Please rate the extent to which you agree that "equalization formulas or finance plans" is currently an important issue.

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. Revenues (state and local) per student (or student type where some students, e.g., special education students, may receive more money per student) should be the same for every school district with the same tax rate regardless of the wealth of the school district.

_____ 2. Revenues per student should not be the same for every school district with the same tax rate.

_____ 3. Revenues per student should be the same for school districts with the same tax rate, but it is not currently feasible to implement such a school finance system.

_____ 4. Other position (please state).

_____ 5. No response.

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

SCOPE AND CONTENT ISSUES

Issue 1: Mainstreaming Special Education and Severely Handicapped Students*

Issue

Do students with severe intellectual, physical, or social handicaps have the right to be educated with regular students, when this limits the guaranteed educational services provided to regular students?

Questions

A. Please rate the extent to which you believe that "mainstreaming special education and severely handicapped students" is currently an important issue.

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. Students with severe handicaps have the right to be educated with regular students.

_____ 2. Students with severe handicaps do not have the right to be educated with regular students.

_____ 3. Handicapped students who don't interfere with regular classroom procedures have the right to be educated with regular students, but those who would interfere do not have the right.

_____ 4. While it would be desirable to educate all students in regular classrooms, it isn't practical to place severely handicapped students with regular students.

_____ 5. Although some persons have advocated educating severely handicapped students with regular students, it really isn't the most beneficial form of education for students with special needs.

_____ 6. Other position (please state).

_____ 7. No response.

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

*The term "handicapped students" includes students with physical, mental or emotional handicaps: physically handicapped, blind and deaf, pregnant students, mentally retarded, brain-injured, language and learning disabled, and emotionally disturbed.

SCOPE AND CONTENT ISSUES

Issue 2: Funding Differences for Regular Education and Special Education

Issue

Are the rights of regular education students being curtailed in an attempt to provide services for the handicapped? Should there be a limit on great disparities in per pupil funding for different categories of students?

Questions

A. Please rate the extent to which you believe that the lack of "limitation on financial obligation for handicapped students" is currently an important issue.

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. There should be a limit placed on the financial obligation of school districts to pay for services for handicapped students.

_____ 2. There should be no limit placed on the financial obligation of school districts to provide services for its handicapped students.

_____ 3. School districts should provide as many special services as finances permit after the basic programs for regular students have been provided.

_____ 4. Although it would be desirable to have unlimited funding for special programs, it isn't financially feasible to have great disparities in per pupil expenditures.

_____ 5. Other position (please state).

_____ 6. No opinion.

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

SCOPE AND CONTENT ISSUES

Issue 3: Responsibilities of State and Local Education Agencies

Issue

What services should local school districts be responsible for providing under the supervision of the Texas Education Agency?

Questions

A. Please rate the extent to which you believe that the "responsibilities of local school districts" is currently an important issue?

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. Local school districts should provide all services (traditional services plus occupational and physical therapy, self-help skills training, medical and psychological care, and full-time residential care) to special student groups under the supervision of the Texas Education Agency.

_____ 2. Local school districts should be responsible for providing traditional services and insuring that other services are provided by other agencies and facilities (e.g., Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Texas Department of Health Resources).

_____ 3. Local school districts should be responsible for providing traditional services but should not be responsible for providing or insuring services through some other agency.

_____ 4. While it is desirable for the schools to expand services for special students, it is not feasible to do so at this time.

_____ 5. Other position (please state).

_____ 6. No opinion.

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

SCOPE AND CONTENT ISSUES

Issue 4: Coordination of Services

Issue

Which agency (school district, United Fund, Texas Department Vocational Rehabilitation, Texas Department of Human Resources, Texas Department of Health Resources, Texas Department of MHMR) will provide which services (academic instruction, self-help skills training, medical evaluation and direct services, physical therapy, health services, etc.) and which agency will pay for the services?

Questions

A. Please rate the extent to which you believe that the "coordination of services" is currently an important issue.

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. Coordination of services is an important issue but it can be handled by existing arrangements for coordination of services between agencies.

_____ 2. Coordination of services is an important issue and additional legislation or voluntary action by agencies is needed to provide for the coordination of services.

_____ 3. Coordination of services is not currently a problem.

_____ 4. Coordination of services is a problem but it is not practical to take action to improve this situation at this time.

_____ 5. Other responese (please state).

_____ 6. No response.

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

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POLICY STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

PART II

Please return this questionnaire to the following address:

Dr. Herbert L. Alston
Houston Independent School District
Research and Evaluation
3830 Richmond Avenue
Houston, Texas 77027

A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Contents

QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY ISSUES

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2. Educational opportunity versus quality of education
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4. Longer school day
5. Expansion of vocational education
6. Competency testing versus normative testing
7. Competency testing and public support

INFLUENCE GROUPS AND CONTROL OF PUBLIC EDUCATION ISSUES

1. Federal legislation of public school programs
2. Adversary relationship between teachers and administrators versus public support of education
3. Strengthening the Texas Education Agency

To facilitate future correspondence, please give the name and title of the person or persons who completed this form. The name of these individuals will not be reported in the study.

Name: Title:

QUALITY OF EDUCATION/EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY ISSUES

Issue 1: Cost of Education Versus Public Support of Education

Issue

Will the rising cost of education result in less public support of education?

Questions

A. Please rate the extent to which you believe that "the rising cost of education may result in the loss of public support" is currently an important issue.

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. If the cost of public education continues to rise, while student achievement remains low or declines, alternatives to public education will be sought.

_____ 2. If the cost of public education continues to rise due to services for disadvantaged and special students, alternatives to public education will be sought.

_____ 3. If the cost of public education increases while the services to students remain constant, parents will seek alternatives to public education.

_____ 4. If services to all students are increased and the cost of public education continues to escalate, alternatives to public education will be sought.

_____ 5. If both services and costs of public education continue to increase, support for public education is likely to remain.

_____ 6. Other alternative (please state).

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION/EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY ISSUES

Issue 2: Educational Opportunity Versus Quality of Education

Issue

What allocation of resources among "high cost" and regular students will promote the highest standard of education for all student groups?

Questions

A. Please rate the extent to which you believe that "equality of allocation of resources" is currently an important issue.

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. Resources should be allocated first to "high cost" students where the need is greatest.

_____ 2. Allocate resources to some "high cost" students, but not to other "high cost" groups.

_____ 3. Distribute resources to both "high cost" and regular students but limit expenditures on "high cost" students so as not to exceed a certain amount, e.g., six times the amount spent on a regular student.

_____ 4. Allocate local resources equally between regular and "high cost" groups and use federal funds to meet the additional needs of "high cost" students.

_____ 5. In order to provide educational opportunity to the greatest number, first allocate resources to regular students, then allot additional funds to those requiring supplemental services.

_____ 6. Given the wealth of the nation as a whole, all services should be provided to students commensurate with their needs and the financial resources can be found to accomplish this.

_____ 7. Other alternative (please state).

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION/EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY ISSUES

Issue 3: Strategies for School Desegregation

Issue

What desegregation strategy or combination of strategies will offer maximum educational opportunity to minority students while minimizing white flight and reduction of community support for public education?

Questions

A. To what extent do you believe that "desegregation strategies" is currently an important issue?

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. Only the more straightforward attempts at desegregation, such as forced transportation of students, will be effective.

_____ 2. Magnet schools represent an effective desegregation strategy while sustaining community support for public education.

_____ 3. Single grade schools are a viable program for providing equal educational opportunity.

_____ 4. Elective transfer plans are worthwhile and should be developed within a district.

_____ 5. School pairing or clustering is a desegregation strategy which is likely to have merit.

_____ 6. The metropolitan plans, i.e. co-operative interchange between urban and suburban districts is an effective method for achieving integration.

_____ 7. Other alternative (please state whether to be used in combination with other strategies).

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION/EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY ISSUES

Issue 4: Longer School Day and/or School Year

Issue

Should the opportunity for an extended school day and/or an extended school year be made available to students in the public schools?

Questions

A. Please rate the extent to which you believe that "extending the school day and/or year" is currently an important issue.

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. The opportunity for both an extended school day and extended school year should be available to students.

_____ 2. The opportunity for an extended school day, but not an extended school year, should be available to students.

_____ 3. The opportunity for an extended school year, but not an extended school day, should be available to students.

_____ 4. Both the current school day and school year should remain as they are.

_____ 5. Other alternative (please state).

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION/EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY ISSUES

Issue 5: Expansion of Vocational Education

Issue

Should there be increased effort to provide vocational education to prepare students for skilled labor jobs upon graduating from high school?

Questions

A. To what extent do you believe that "the expansion of vocational education" is currently an important issue?

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. There should be an increased effort to provide vocational education of all types to prepare students for skilled labor jobs upon graduation from high school.

_____ 2. There should be a concentrated effort to provide secretarial and clerical education to students to meet industrial employment demands.

_____ 3. There should be a concentrated effort to provide vocational training for mechanics, machinists, and craftsmen to fill the need for skilled laborers.

_____ 4. Instead of expanding vocational education, there should be an expanded effort to provide sufficient academic training for all students, so that those desiring a college education can qualify, gaining professional skills on the college level.

_____ 5. While it would be desirable to expand vocational education, it is not financially feasible at this time.

_____ 6. Other alternative (please state).

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION/EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY ISSUES

Issue 6: Competency Testing Versus Normative Testing

Issue

Should competency tests replace or supplement normative tests?

Questions

A. Please rate the extent to which you believe that "the use of competency tests and normative tests" is currently an important issue?

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. Competency tests should replace normative tests as a basis for assessing the educational progress of students.

_____ 2. Competency tests should not be used to assess the educational progress of students.

_____ 3. Both competency tests and normative tests should be used to assess the educational progress of students.

_____ 4. Neither competency tests nor normative tests should be used to assess the progress of students.

_____ 5. Other alternatives (please state).

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION/EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY ISSUES

Issue 7: Competency Testing, Accountability and Public Support of Education

Issue

Will competency testing satisfy the public's desire for accountability in education and result in continued support for public education?

Questions

A. To what extent do you believe that "competency testing and the public's desire for accountability in education" is currently an important issue?

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. Competency tests should replace normative tests as a measure of school success in measuring the effectiveness of schools.

_____ 2. Competency tests should not be used as a measure of school success for accountability purposes.

_____ 3. Both competency tests and normative tests should be used to assess school effectiveness for accountability purposes.

_____ 4. Neither type of test should be used to assess the success of schools.

_____ 5. Competency tests should be developed on a statewide basis which can be normed to provide a statewide normative group for interpreting the competency tests.

_____ 6. Other alternatives (please state).

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

INFLUENCE GROUPS/CONTROL OF PUBLIC EDUCATION ISSUES

Issue 1: Federal Legislation of Public School Programs

Issue

Can federal laws mandate aspects of education that have traditionally been the responsibility of state and local school officials and can federal courts mandate specific educational administrative/instructional procedures if such procedures cannot be shown to violate the federal constitution?

Questions

A. To what extent do you believe that "federal legislation of public school programs" is currently an important issue?

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. The federal government and the federal courts may rule certain practices illegal and/or may state the specific educational procedures for complying with the law.

_____ 2. The federal government and the federal courts may rule certain practices illegal but should not state the specific practices for complying with federal law.

_____ 3. The federal government may pass any law concerning public education and it is binding on all educational institutions.

_____ 4. The federal government may not pass laws concerning public education per se, but only deal with matters concerning equal educational opportunities unless an amendment is made to the U. S. Constitution.

_____ 5. Other alternatives (please state).

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

Issue 2: Adversary Relationship Between Teachers and Administrators versus Public Support of Education

Issue

Would the adoption of union tactics by teacher organizations result in the loss of public support of the schools?

Questions

A. To what extent do you believe that "the role of teacher unions" is currently an important issue?

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. Adoption of union tactics by teacher organizations would result in the loss of public support for the schools and should be avoided.

_____ 2. Adoption of union tactics by teacher organizations would not result in the loss of public support for the schools and should be pursued.

_____ 3. While adoption of union tactics by teacher organizations would probably result in the loss of public support for the schools, such tactics should be pursued in order to maintain the teaching staff.

_____ 4. While adoption of union tactics by teacher organizations would probably not result in the loss of public support for the schools, such tactics should be avoided as inappropriate conduct for the groups.

_____ 5. Other opinions (please state).

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

Issue 3: Strengthening the Texas Education Agency

Issue

Should state funds for the Texas Education Agency be increased and should the salaries of its employees be made commensurate with their associates in other institutions?

Questions

A. To what extent do you believe that "strengthening the Texas Education Agency" is currently an important issue?

Very Important	Important	Neutral or Undecided	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5

B. Please check your position on this issue.

_____ 1. State funds for the TEA should be increased but the salary levels should not be.

_____ 2. State funds for the TEA should be increased and the salaries of its employees raised.

_____ 3. State funds for the TEA do not need to be increased; nor do the salaries of its employees.

_____ 4. While it would be worthwhile to strengthen the TEA, it is not financially feasible to do so at this time.

_____ 5. Other opinions (please state).

C. Please list any current or proposed legislation related to this issue.

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APPENDIX A

REVENUE BY SOURCE
1977-78 SCHOOL YEAR

Local Revenue (excluding enterprise funds)

Tax Revenue (Maintenance & Debt Service)	$ _____	
Other Local Revenue	_____	
Total Local Revenue		$ _____

State Revenue (If you are a fiscal agent or another district is a fiscal agent for services received by your students, estimate only those revenues pertaining to your district.)

Regular Ed. Salaries	$ _____	
Special Ed. Salaries	_____	
Voc. Ed. Salaries	_____	
Operating Costs	_____	
Compensatory Ed.	_____	
Driver Ed.	_____	
Special Ed. Support	_____	
Regional Deaf	_____	
Transportation - Regular	_____	
Transportation - Special	_____	
Local Fund Assignment	(_____)	
Equalization	_____	
Educational T.V.	_____	
Student Teacher Reimbursement	_____	
Vocational Travel	_____	
Vocational - Adult Ed.	_____	
Vocational - Secondary Ed.	_____	
Bilingual Education	_____	
Other State Revenue	_____	
Total State Revenue		$ _____

Federal Revenue (Include all federal funds that flow through TEA such as Title I)

Title I	$ _____	
Other Federal Revenue	_____	
Total Federal Revenue		$ _____

Total Revenue (Excludes enterprise funds and proceeds from bond sales) $ _____

Other Data

GCEP Market Values _____

Ag-Use Adjusted Values _____

Refined ADA _____

	73-74	74-75	75-76	76-77	77-78
Maintenance Tax Rate	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Debt Service Tax Rate	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Assessment Ratio	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

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TABLE 1

Source of Revenue by District Type*

DISTRICT TYPE	SOURCE OF REVENUE									
	LOCAL		STATE				FEDERAL	TOTAL	LOCAL FUND ASSIGNMENT	EFFECTIVE TAX RATE
	PROPERTY TAX	OTHER	ASF	FSP-(ASF + LFA + EQ)	EQ	OTHER			% of State Funds	
Major Urban Districts										
a) Houston	50%	3%	14%	26%	0%	1%	6%	100%	26.4%	.901
b) Ft. Worth	31%	3%	13%	41%	2%	1%	9%	100%	13.0%	.941
c) Corpus Christie	36%	1%	17%	30%	5%	3%	8%	100%	12.5%	.912
Other Central Cities										
a) Sherman	32%	2%	13%	44%	1%	5%	3%	100%	12.7%	1.092
b) Brownsville	18%	.3%	21%	45%	.05%	3.3%	12.5%	100%	6.3%	1.300
c) Amarillo	34%	.2%	15%	43%	3.7%	.3%	2%	100%	11.1%	1.029
Suburban Fast Grow										
a) Spring	55%	2%	13%	27.3%	2%	.4%	.3%	100%	12.2%	1.208

* ASF refers to the Available School Fund and is based on $240 per reported ADA.

** FSP refers to the estimated cost of the Foundation School Program. A school district receives the estimated cost of the FSP minus the ASF and minus the Local Fund Assignment (LFA). Equalization money is a part of the FSP, but is reported separately here because only poor school districts receive Equalization funds (EQ funds).

*** Effective tax rate is the sum of the maintenance tax rate and the debt service tax rate times the assessment ratio.

**** All information in Table 1 is based on a survey conducted by HISD in January 1978. The selection of school districts for each district type in this table was arbitrary.

TABLE 1

Source of Revenue by District Type*

DISTRICT TYPE	SOURCE OF REVENUE							TOTAL	LOCAL FUND ASSIGNMENT % of State Funds	EFFECTIVE TAX RATE
	LOCAL		STATE				FEDERAL			
	PROPERTY TAX	OTHER	ASF	FSP-(ASF + LFA + EQ)	EQ	OTHER				
Surburban Fast Grow										
b) Grapevine	44.2%	1.4%	12.1%	40.3%	.5%	.3%	1.1%	100%	21.2%	.975
c) Richardson	40.4%	1.3%	14.7%	39.7%	3.6%	.3%	0%	100%	11.8%	.970
Suburban Stable										
a) Alamo Height	47%	1.5%	10.5%	40%	0%	.3%	.7%	100%	22.3%	1.080
b) Vidor	37.1%	.4%	15.5%	39.5%	5.7%	.4%	1.4%	100%	9.3%	1.240
c) Edgewood	9.9%	1.6%	21.9%	31.1%	16.5%	.9%	18.1%	100%	2.9%	1.400
Non-Metro With 1000										
a) Muleshoe	35.8%	.9%	12.8%	42.1%	0%	.2%	8.2%	100%	17.5%	.900
b) Georgetown	34%	.9%	15%	40%	4.1%	1%	5%	100%	9.3%	1.403
c) Lockhart	22%	2%	15%	40%	5%	2%	14%	100%	8.3%	1.148

TABLE 1

Source of Revenue by District Type*

DISTRICT TYPE	SOURCE OF REVENUE							TOTAL	LOCAL FUND ASSIGNMENT % of State Funds	EFFECTIVE TAX RATE
	LOCAL		STATE				FEDERAL			
	PROPERTY TAX	OTHER	ASF	FSP-(ASF + LFA + EQ)	EQ	OTHER				
Non-Metro With Town										
a) Jacksboro	56%	0%	14%	28%	0%	.5%	1.5%	100%	33.0%	2.098
b) Munday	29.9%	2.2%	13.1%	47.6%	2.2%	.4%	4.6%	100%	10.9%	1.088
c) Teague	42%	.3%	13%	41%	0%	.4%	3.3%	100%	15.2%	.775
Rural										
a) Mt. Enterprise	22.9%	0%	14.4%	53.4%	1.5%	.5%	7.3%	100%	8.5%	1.088